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DRAMATURGICAL STUDIES RELATING TO
WAITING FOR GODOT

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Dramaturgical Studies Relating to Waiting For Godot" submitted by Judy Doan in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

As a dramaturgical study this thesis does not follow the "traditional" thesis form; consequently, no conclusion is made per se. I shall explain. A dramaturge is a resource person who serves to enlighten the director with key concepts, not to enforce one premise and make the ultimate conclusion from that particular statement, but rather to help shape the performance concept.

This study attempts to provide an analysis of relevant philosophical, literary, and theatrical concepts that emerge from Waiting for Godot upon which a dramaturge could base his reading of the play.

Mr. Beckett merits our most serious attention, not only because he remains still, two decades after his initial exposure, an enigma, and a puzzle to the contemporary playgoer, but because he deals with universal problems and questions; he probes the human consciousness. In a unique experience the spectator is made to understand an aspect of the human condition. He sees his incredible confidence and his surfeit of intelligence lead to loneliness and rationalization as he makes all sorts of attempts to escape this cul de sac.

With the dramaturge supplying background information to the director and cast, the theatrical experience becomes far richer and more meaningful. In approaching Waiting For Godot as a dramaturge, therefore, I have gone to the disciplines of Philosophy, Literature, Art, and Theatre. I have followed a course that has not been straight. The paths have crossed often leading me to small trails, fallen trees have obstructed the way too and have forced me to take other directions, and so on.

Speaking in such terms may seem rather ludicrous but that is the sort of thing that happens in a theatrical production. Innumerable things stimulate the people involved. So with Godot I have been led to the writings of Bergson, Camus and Hegel in Philosophy, to Kafka and Mann in Literature, to the cubists and futurists in Art, and to Richard Schechner, Jerzy Grotowski, Herbert Blau and to my friends and to my own experiences in Theatre.

The dramaturge's function is to link the bridge between analysis and action, between the "academics" and the practitioners. Only when these two groups link hands can real advances occur in the theatre.

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Where I am, I don't know,
I'll never know,
in the silence you don't know,
you must go on,
I can't go on,
I'll go on.

-Samuel Beckett:
The Unnamable

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Samuel Beckett, playwright of the Absurd, remains still, two decades after his initial exposure, an enigma, and a puzzle to the contemporary playgoer. His work is a departure, a bizarre and unique experience at once both funny and frightening.

In the view of modern day psychology man is defined as a psycho-bio-social animal; i.e. his personality is a product of psychological, genetic and environmental influences. In the study and understanding of the final product it is necessary to examine each of these interacting factors. A work of art, the creation of the man, can also be examined in this light, the work being the result of all the forces operating within the individual. Therefore, a study of the man and his social, historical and cultural background can be an aid in the understanding and interpretation of his creation. To paraphrase Yeats, we cannot separate the dancer from the dance;¹ similarly, we

¹In his poem "Among School Children" Yeats actually said,

...O brightening glance
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

cannot separate the artist from his creation. Yet it is important for us to see the basic set of assumptions and the frame of reference under which the man-artist is operating. It illuminates his attitudes, beliefs, intent, creative thought process and his underlying philosophy. By studying Beckett's background, we can understand a little better why his plays are the way they are and why his characters talk and react the way they do.

Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin in 1906 to a Protestant Irish middle class family. He attended one of Ireland's traditional boarding schools, Portora Royal, and then went on to Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained his B.A. in French and Italian in 1927. His academic distinction in these languages was such that he was chosen by the university as its representative in the traditional exchange of lecturers with the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. Soon after he was there, Beckett met fellow Irishman, James Joyce, and the two quickly became good friends and worked closely together. Thus began his lifelong association with Paris and Joyce.

In 1930 Beckett returned to Trinity College as an assistant professor of romance languages. After four terms there he quit, and freed himself from what he considered the drugged influence of habit -- or what Vladimir

in Waiting for Godot calls "a great deadner";² he cut loose from all routine and social duties. Writing poems and stories, doing odd jobs, he moved from Dublin to London to Paris and through France and Germany. Many of his later characters such as Vladimir and Estragon, are lonely tramps and wanderers, probably a reflection on Beckett's own life.

During World War II, Beckett stayed in Paris and worked underground with the Resistance. He could not remain a neutral Irishman for long; the anger he felt led to his active involvement. However, following the arrests of some of the Resistance members, Beckett fled Paris and escaped to the unoccupied zone where he worked as a farm laborer in the Vaucluse, near Arigon. Here he remained in semi-hiding until the German collapse. While in the Vaucluse, he began work on a novel, Watt, which deals with an eccentric individual who finds refuge as a servant in a country house ruled by a mysterious master, Mr. Knott, who

²Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1954), p. 58b. Subsequent references to the play will derive from this edition and will be given in abbreviated form by simply noting the page of reference in parentheses throughout the text of the thesis. Since the pages are not numbered consecutively (e.g. the page on the reader's left as page 3 and on the right as page 4, but rather the page on the left is marked 3 but the page on the right has no number), I have systemized the edition by calling the page on the left, 3a and that on the right, 3b.

has some of the attributes of *Godot*. The Vaucluse is mentioned in the French version of *Godot*, albeit in the English version it has become "the Macon country." (p. 39b)

After the Paris liberation in 1945, Beckett returned briefly to Ireland, and then went back to Paris, where, in the next five years, he produced the works which have become the foundation of his reputation as one of the major literary forces of our time. Curiously, all these works were written in French. This is unusual because writers who work in a language other than their own tongue usually do so because of exile, or because of a desire to break with their own country for political or ideological reasons, or because of a desire to reach a world audience. Beckett, however, chose to write in French because he felt he needed the discipline which the use of a foreign language would impose on him, a discipline that would cause him to omit the embellishments of style which would be tempting in English, and concentrate on the utmost clarity and economy of expression.³ Granted, an enormous amount of discipline would be required in writing in an acquired language but Beckett believed that by incurring such a discipline there would be no danger of unconsciously

³Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (N.Y.: Anchor Books Doubleday and Company, 1961), p. 9.

connecting the meanings of words.⁴

Beckett himself, somewhat surprisingly in view of the anguish and suffering of the characters in his works, is described as being "the most balanced and serene of men,"⁵ ever continuing his exploration of the human condition, his quest for the answer to such basic and universal questions as "Who am I?" and "What does it mean when I say--I?"⁶ From his activities in the war, Beckett has known what it is to fear something, to suffer, and to endure hardships; but he has known too, the very determination which allows one to stay alive and go on, which we find over and over again in his work. From his earliest writings, Beckett asserted the duty of the artist to express the totality and complexity of his experience regardless of the public's insistence upon comprehensibility.⁷ This attitude is definitely reflected in Waiting for Godot which is certainly not a play for an audience that merely wishes to be entertained in the conventional way.

⁴Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 9.

⁵Ibid., p. 11.

⁶Ibid., p. 23.

⁷Ibid., p. 5.

Beckett's first real triumph came when Waiting for Godot was first produced on January 5th, 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris, and against all expectations became one of the greatest successes of the post-war theatre. It has been translated into more than twenty languages, and has been performed in most countries, an amazing record for such an unconventional, complex, enigmatic work.

Alan Schneider, who directed the first American production of Godot asked Beckett, "Who or what was meant by Godot" and the answer was immediately forthcoming: "If I knew, I would have said so in the play."⁸ Beckett's answer to Schneider's question shows his keen insight into the mystery of the existence of modern man. He expresses his insight in a medium that cannot be compared to traditional "Aristotelian" theatre as we know it. What the audience gets is just an image of Beckett's intuition that nothing really ever happens in man's existence.

As an absurdist playwright, Samuel Beckett does not argue about the absurdity of human existence; he merely presents it to us in the form of images and ideas. Waiting for Godot is not a "well-made" play -- there is no unity of time or action, no plot to speak of, or motivated charac-

⁸ Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 24.

terization. Characters have become, rather, embodiments of basic human attitudes. Estragon says this when talking of Pozzo who is calling for help, "He's all humanity." (p. 54a) What is important is not what has happened or what will happen to the four characters so much as to what degree the audience has been shaken to realize the reality of their situation.

Although Beckett's thought is bound by the paradox of trying to communicate, his play allows us to "become one" or commune with the nothingness he intuitively knows. By facing up to the nothingness, we will be able to start to find reality. Beckett is fond of quoting Democritus, "Nothing is more real than Nothing."⁹

I do not believe that Beckett's plays are unrealistic; rather he is looking at the world from a different angle where things do not happen in a rational logically ordered pattern. From his new vantage point he sees people on a primary level of existence grappling with the basic problems of being. His characters are struggling for security. Thus I feel that Beckett's plays imitate life, though not in a conventional sense. They mirror a reality which ordinarily we do not see or accept. True reality

⁹ Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 314.

for Beckett lies in power struggles, loneliness, isolation, mundane repetition and fear of self-discovery, and not in the trivial details surrounding each character's origin and background.

If there is any meaning in Beckett it lies in the probing of the human consciousness and in the tragedy of his characters who have no understanding of what is happening to them. His characters reflect the tensions and attitudes of twentieth century man; they are symbolic of us and our trivialities and we experience a shock of recognition. It is this that evokes the tensions, riddles and terror both onstage and in the audience.

Beckett does not draw neat diagrams or make comprehensive statements of what is wrong in our world and how we can solve it. He presents it jumbled and incomplete hoping that his offering might stimulate our thinking and heighten our level of understanding the human condition. Beckett has forcefully reminded the modern theatre that the proper study of the stage is man and the dilemma of his humanity. Beckett is agonizingly aware of the human condition and its universal uncertainty and he voices the anguish he feels. In his world, the machinery of existence seems to be grinding to a halt. The titles: Krapp's Last Tape, Endgame, Malone Dies, suggest a

civilization with terminal cancer. The suffocating womb becomes a death trap: the urns encasing the characters in Play, the mound of earth piled up to Winnie's neck in Happy Days, the ashcans of Endgame. This degradation and mutilation of the body are Beckett's image of the withering away of the soul. Though an existentialist would argue that man, at any moment of self-confrontation, is free to change his situation, Beckett's art commits itself to the human condition. The vision of decay is pronounced in the name of human existence.

Though he has spent most of his life in Paris, Beckett is Irish and the lilt of the Gael runs poetically through even his laconic prose. The brooding sins of grievance, the delight in wordplay, the spellbinding gifts of the barroom raconteur -- all these Irish traits are in Beckett. With Joyce, he shares an inordinate relish for puns and scatology, and a tendency to regard sex as either a joke or a sin.

It was in September of 1969 that this demanding, obscure, and austere self-contained writer, Samuel Beckett, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. As a drop of water implies the sea, the personal obsession of such a scrupulous and sensitive writer may mirror the inarticulate concerns of multitudes of men. Beckett mirrors an age that feels suffocated by its desolating sense of nothingness.

In reading Waiting For Godot we have no one key to unlocking an answer. If Beckett himself does not consciously "know" what Godot stands for, we in turn can only project our ideas. But we can take a hint from Beckett's ideas that content and form can become one; what is being said to us is indissolubly linked with how it is being said.

Ideally in performance subject and execution ought to be one, and in Waiting For Godot the play's meaning lies in its performance, since it organizes movement, gesture, and speech in time and space as to form a structure. This is ultimately what I am interested in examining. Beckett's plays are designed to be performed by actors for an audience; he plays on our senses -- he involves eyes, ears, intellect, emotion, simultaneously and we feel the texture of the whole experience as we remain in the theatre for however long the production lasts. Out "there" on that stage, something does happen. Behind the words are many implications in so many different areas -- philosophy, psychology, religion. But, in a theatrical presentation, if actors were to approach their work on an academic basis, it would only lead to confusion and stilting of the intuitive and creative dialogue and action which in my view is essential to any dramatic performance.

Not that academic talents shouldn't be brought to bear on a production. Indeed, they should. In the theatre

this task is best left to the dramaturge. (In many theatres, however, this position is filled by the director and his assistants for either lack of finances or lack of an awareness of the need for a dramaturge.) In this study I wish to assume the role of a dramaturge to delve into the many possible aspects of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot. Playing this role of dramaturge for this particular study requires one to delve into thoughts and writings on the subjects of time and space. Never perhaps have our feelings about time changed so radically and assumed such importance in our eyes as in this century. The theories associated chiefly with Bergson, Freud, and Einstein in the fields of Philosophy, Psychology, and Science respectively, gave a new turn to modern thought.

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People in olden times believed that there was a symmetrical framework that held a stable universe together in a regular series of relationships. The traditional view of man and his universe was the Ptolemaic one which had been upheld since classical times. It was based upon a balanced order ruled by Nature. The natural world was subdivided into cosmological and sublunary domains, the two interdependent realms of the heavens and the earth. The sublunary world was the domain of living creatures, and was arranged in a chain of beings from minerals to God. Man stood midway, lodged between animals and angels, and hence

displayed characteristics of both. Thus he was the highest of the animals and the lowest of the "angelic" beings. Like the angels he could know universal truths, but like the animals he had to use his five senses to form images which reason could abstract to those angelic truths. Thus he was the essential link between the two hierarchical domains. But man's position in this scheme was as precarious as it was crucial; for he must always struggle to approach the level of the angels in order to avoid sinking to the level of the beasts.

Throughout the Ptolemaic system there was an essential unity of creation based upon balances between man and the cosmos. It was this interdependence of all facets of Nature which was man's greatest concern; a law of Nature broken by man could destroy the balance of the entire cosmos.

Concepts of time, knowledge, and identity are related to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' ferment of ideas. The nineteenth century was dominated by beliefs in permanence, progress, and evolution; it was the age of Darwin, Huxley, and Agassiz -- the age of science.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the physical sciences were shaken with a new notion of time. Previously time had been regarded either realistically, as something independent of existence or other subjects and

existing without an observer; or subjectively, as something having no existence apart from an observer and present only in sense experience. However, in 1908, the mathematician, Hermann Minkowski, speaking before the Naturforschenden Gesellschaft, proclaimed this statement:

Space alone or time alone is doomed to fade into a mere shadow; only a kind of union of both will preserve their existence.¹⁰

With the decline of interest in the physical sciences, many artists were particularly influenced by the science of psychology. It was from the belief in evolution, science, and progress that many new ideas in art came. Even if not related to science, these new ideas were at least simultaneous expressions of a new spirit.

The theatre and its drama participates in this expression of new views. Not only can playwrights deal with the subjects of space and time but the drama's actual structure demands the use of space and time physically even if the subject's content does not deal with this topic. Because of the fact that the theatre, as an art form, has rather a Protean quality which is partially contributed to by its use of "time" and "space," in drama, time-distances

¹⁰ Sigfried, Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 439.

are abridged often taking no account of actual historical duration or continuity. Consequently, certain scenes, although in reality separated by days or years, in a play are able to succeed one another quite convincingly.

P. A. Michaelis says that these vast leaps of time can occur simply because

It is not the task of the dramatist to record history, but to draw his reflections from it; he can therefore ... eliminate the non-essential to display only the vital.¹¹

Hence, time in this sense takes on an infinite quality, or as Plato has it in his Timaeus, "the moving image of eternity." But, a play is defined in terms of all the activities that take place in the time fragment as well as being defined in terms of the particular human activity that occupies its space. Every gesture, line, movement, pause, or silence, has its own small unit of time to fill up. It is through the interplay and tension of each of these smaller units that a play expresses its meaning, intent, or theme.

This is just a sampling of the background that is necessary for a dramaturge working on the script of Godot and dealing with time-space concepts. The few ideas ex-

¹¹P. A. Michaelis, "Aesthetic Distance and the Charm of Contemporary Art" in Aesthetics and the Arts by Lee A. Jacobus (N. Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 39.

pressed here as well as other pertinent concepts in philosophy, literature, art, and theatre practice will assist me in my search for a performance-oriented analysis of Waiting for Godot.

PART I: APPLYING PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS

CHAPTER II

HENRI BERGSON AND TIME AND SPACE

That Henri Bergson was very much interested in art and the artist can be clearly illustrated by his many references to both throughout his works. And that his works exerted a considerable amount of influence on such artists as Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, Marcel Proust and many others, cannot be denied. The kind of influence which Bergson's work exerted on these artists immediately establishes a close relationship between art and philosophy. Bergson's concept of time and space can be applied to Beckett's "time-piece" Waiting for Godot; consequently, an analysis of Bergson's philosophy must first be explained.¹

Henri Bergson sees a fundamental conflict between two opposing tendencies, on the one hand, the dynamic élan vital (life force) and on the other, static matter. The élan vital constantly struggles against matter and strives towards creativity and individuality. Its opponent, matter, has a magnetic force which tries to drag the élan vital down to its death. For Bergson it is the artist who by his intui-

¹For a fuller explanation of Bergson's concepts see Appendix A.

tion is able to penetrate through matter to reality.

Bergson distinguishes between two ways of viewing reality. The first, "duration," is measurable, quantitative, mathematical time; the second, "Pure Duration" (durée réelle), is immeasurable, and qualitative. The first difficulty which Bergson faces in attempting to define Pure Duration is one which confronts many philosophers and all artists, namely that of expression.

All problems encountered with duration can be formulated in the following manner: we think "time" in "space"² or more accurately, we speak of time in terms of space; we express duration in terms of extensity, and this duration takes the form of a continuous chain, the parts of which touch without penetrating one another. If, however, we could think of time as a succession of qualitative changes which interpenetrate each, such that they cannot be juxtaposed side by side in space, that is, if we could eliminate the idea of space, then we could understand time as being independent of space. It is with this pragmatic view of duration that we are able to communicate with others via the intellect; it enables us to exist in all the trivialities of life. In short, within Bergson's durée or "mind-time," subject and object are fused.

2

Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness, (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 91.

The indivisible continuity of change is what constitutes Pure Duration. Bergson points out that there is nothing mystical about it:

I shall confine myself therefore to saying, in reply to those for whom this "real duration" is something inexpressible and mysterious, that it is the clearest thing in the world: real duration is what we have always called time, but time perceived as indivisible. That time implies succession I do not deny. But that succession is first presented to our consciousness, like the distinction of a "before" and "after" set side by side, is what I cannot admit. When we listen to a melody we have the purest impression we could possibly have -- an impression as far removed as possible from that of simultaneity -- and yet it is the very continuity of the melody and the impossibility of breaking it up which make that impression upon us. If we cut it up into distinct notes, into so many "befores" and "afters," we are bringing spatial images into it and impregnating the succession with simultaneity: in space, and only in space, is there a clear-cut distinction of parts external to one another.³

The most common examples which Bergson uses to illustrate Pure Duration are music and the self. These however are merely illustrations revealing the intent of a process. They are to Pure Duration what a paraphrase is to a poem.

³Henri Bergson, A Study in Metaphysics: The Creative Mind. (N. J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1965), p. 149.

Bergson's Pure Duration is precisely what the composer attempts to present symbolically. It is not that music presents reality more directly than philosophical discourse, but music presents an emotional reality, an artistic reality, more adequately in this form. But the musical reality simply cannot give a discursive account of itself in the end. For this reason art is neither philosophy nor a substitute for it, but is itself something which can be philosophized about. Pure Duration establishes a bond between the artist and the philosopher. Both see it as important; both wish to communicate their own individual evaluation of what it means to be a human being.

Bergson maintains that man's intellect points him towards the Absolute but he transcends his intellect by means of intuition. Intuition allows us to gain a direct insight into Pure Duration for it is grounded in immediate awareness. It can gain a direct insight into the Absolute for "an absolute can only be given in an intuition."⁴ It enables us to see not just the external objective world, nor just the internal subjective world, but rather the relationship between the two.

For Bergson, the clearest evidence of intuition is

⁴Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics Translated by T. E. Hulme (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 7.

in the works of great artists. The artist is able to discard those things which the ordinary man sees with a view toward action or what has become for him habit, and to perceive them as unique. The artist attempts to arouse man from his "everydayness" so he can see and understand what it really means to exist. Bergson maintains that the object of art is to bring reality "into direct contact with sense and consciousness, ...to enter into immediate communion with things and with ourselves."⁵ For Bergson, as for the later existentialists, becoming is the essence of time.

Like Bergson, Beckett also wants to get to the fundamental self, a self which by its very nature is change. In Waiting for Godot everyone is waiting for someone, something which may or may not exist -- Godot. It is a play about time, which like Bergson's Pure Duration is in constant change and flux. It is doubtful that the characters would recognize Godot even if he did appear, for at times they are not sure they recognize each other, or even themselves.

Recognition is a constant problem in the play. The messenger boy from Godot fails to recognize Gogo and Didi from day to day. (In the French version it is specified that it is the same boy on each occasion.) He denies that

⁵Henri Bergson, Laughter: Essay on the Significance of the Comic (N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 157.

he has ever seen the pair before, and in the second act, claims that this is the first time he has acted as Godot's messenger. Vladimir tries to impress the meeting upon him. This is the greatest urgency of both Vladimir and Estragon -- to be seen, to be noticed in life. The message Vladimir sends back to Godot is "Tell him...(he hesitates)...that you saw me." (p. 59a) And even Estragon in the middle of his tree routine says, "Do you think God sees me?" And Vladimir says, "Yes, but you've got to close your eyes." (p. 49b) Meaning to me, that by closing your eyes, you can see God and unless you see God, God is not going to see you. These two old men are surely crying out into that hollow void an urgent plea for somebody to notice them. It is a stunning blow to Vladimir in the second act that Pozzo is blind, that Lucky is dumb. He is never sure whether the Boy, who comes in twice, has ever seen him -- or whether it is even the same Boy. So his final plea is "Tell him you saw me." (p. 59a) This cry voices the need he has for the recognition of his own existence.

Pozzo and Lucky have appeared several times with Vladimir and Estragon, the friends who are waiting for Godot. But Vladimir comments that Pozzo and Lucky have changed since their last appearance and Estragon insists that he does not know them. And in Act II, Pozzo cannot recognize Gogo and Didi:

I don't remember having met anyone
yesterday. But to-morrow I won't
remember having met anyone to-day.
(pp. 56b-57a)

I do not feel that Beckett wishes to philosophize about the human situation; he does not want to argue for or against it; he is not interested, as Bergson is, in attempting to prove that there are two ways of looking at time, such as Pure Duration and mathematical time. But I do feel that Beckett wants his audience to know, in the sense of experience, what it is to be aware of the human situation, hence he "presents" an experience of Pure Duration and what it is like to be aware of it. Bergson believes that the intellect is incapable of understanding Pure Duration primarily because the intellect, due to its very nature observes things with a view toward action; it performs acts habitually and does not wish to expend the effort needed to break habits in order to get a glimpse of existence. Beckett expounds on his position of habit:

Habit is the ballast that chains the
dog to his vomit. Breathing is habit.
Life is habit. Or rather life is a
succession of habits, since the in-
dividual is a succession of individuals....
Habit then is the generic term for the
countless subjects that constitute the
individual and their correlative objects.
The periods of transition that separate
consecutive adaptations...represent the
perilous zones in the life of the indivi-
dual, dangerous, precarious, painful,
mysterious and fertile, when for a moment
the boredom and living is replaced by the

suffering of being.... The suffering of being: that is the free play of every faculty. Because the pernicious devotion of habit paralyses our attention, drugs those handmaidens of perception whose cooperation is not absolutely essential.⁶

This is partly what Waiting for Godot is about. The characters in the play have pastimes which are all designed to prevent them from utilizing their intellect -- that is, from seeing the human situation as it really is.

Beckett's plays are attempts to show the limitations of language in communicating any kind of knowledge, but particularly knowledge of existence and of Pure Duration. As Esslin puts it:

Beckett's use of the stage is an attempt to reduce the gap between the limitations of language and the intuition of being, the sense of the human situation he seeks to express in spite of his strong feeling that words are inadequate to formulate it. The concreteness and three dimensional nature of the stage can be used to add new resources to language as an instrument of thought and exploration of being.⁷

No doubt it is through stage language that Beckett hopes to express those things which he himself realizes are impossible to express verbally, attempt it as he might.

⁶Samuel Beckett, Proust and Three Dialogues, (London: John Calder, 1965), pp. 19-20.

⁷Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 44.

The artistic tendency is not expansive, but a contraction. And art is the apotheosis of solitude. There is no communication because there are no vehicles of communication. Even on the rare occasions when word and gesture happen to be valid expressions of personality, they lose their significance on their passage through the cataract of the personality that is opposed to them. Either we speak and act for ourselves -- in which case speech and action are distorted and emptied of their meaning by an intelligence that is not ours or else we speak and act for others -- in which case we speak and act a lie.⁸

Beckett's use of language must continually be viewed paradoxically as an attempt to communicate that which is essentially impossible to communicate.

Marshall McLuhan goes as far as Beckett in devaluating language. He claims that

Language does for intelligence what the wheel does for the feet and the body. It enables them to move from thing to thing with greater ease and speed and even less involvement. Language extends and amplifies man but it also divides his faculties. His collective consciousness or intuitive awareness is diminished by his technical extension of consciousness that is speech.⁹

Philosophy cannot express an experience and when the

⁸ Samuel Beckett, Proust and Three Dialogues, p. 64.

⁹ Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Toronto: Signet Books, 1967), p. 83.

philosopher makes an attempt to do so he is reduced to the babbling of Lucky in Beckett's play, when, after having had his thinking hat placed on his head, he begins to philosophize. Beckett's medium in Waiting for Godot is as undefinable and unpossessable as the message that modern man can no longer "possess" life with his scientific method or his language.

Bergson's theory of duration and his concept of subjective time has strongly influenced Beckett's drama as it has all existentialist drama. An audience intuitively identifies as participants in his drama. The actors function almost as tableaux and vignettes to envelope the emotional response of the audience; hence the reactions of the actors and the audience become one. The actors become "possessed" by an emotion and they release this emotion, this loneliness this misery that they feel in such a way as to include the audience as fellow participants in the experience. Thus through some mysterious, magical communication, the audience is held emotionally. It is an intuitive thing and defies analysis but it lives where actor and audience become one in a live theatrical experience. But it is rare this catharsis, this direct, complete communication. Yet even if it is but for an instant, like the "instant" that the light gleams in Pozzo's "grave" speech (c.f. p. 57b), paradoxically it is infinite, as human actions are infinite.

CHAPTER III

ALBERT CAMUS AND THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

Bergson, in Time and Free Will saw that time must be dealt with in terms of the individual. Duration became not a feeble imitation of eternity but constituted life itself. So too in Camus' philosophy. The individual is all important; he must act in the moment but he must recognize its limits. We must break the habit which Beckett speaks of and attempt to come to grips with a less conventional reality, with what Camus calls the "absurd."

Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm -- this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the "why" arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. "Begins" -- this is important.¹

The Theatre of the Absurd which leans heavily on the philosophy of Albert Camus illustrates the relationship

¹Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays Translated by Justin O'Brien (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1952), p. 10.

between art and philosophy. Both wish to examine the human situation, hence their alliance; and each has different methods of expressing it -- therein is revealed their difference.

A background to the Theatre of the Absurd is therefore necessary for an understanding of Beckett's work, for it is within this structure that he persuades his spectators to swallow his comedy-coated pill of absurdity by allowing them to believe that it is all just harmless humour. However, under the farcical element of his absurd drama lies a serious concern. In his essay, The Myth of Sisyphus Albert Camus discusses his ideas on absurdity and creation.

Camus is the modern heir to man's, and in particular the philosopher's, perpetual quest for the Absolute. He recognizes this quest as "the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart."² The synthesis of this longing and man's environment is what Camus calls the absurd. This absurdity is the subject of The Myth of Sisyphus.

For Camus, the problem of man's existence in the world is crystallized in the question of suicide, both in the physical death sense and in the sense of a logical

²Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus Translated by Justin O'Brien (N.Y.: Random House, 1942), p. 16.

philosophical death. When man is faced with the absurdity of his existence he often eludes living while not physically killing himself. In Beckett's play the tramps exemplify this premise; they constantly consider suicide but never commit the actual act. To achieve a lucid view of life yet not to elude living in the face of the hard reality of life is the problem faced by all men. This problem is well described by Franz Kafka:

Two tasks on the threshold of life: To narrow your circle more and more, and constantly to make certain that you have not hidden yourself somewhere outside of it.³

In approaching this problem Camus regards man's assurance of his existence much as Descartes did (i.e. cogito, ergo sum) but with a variation. Science alone cannot reveal the truth about the universe. There are truths but no truth. In fact, science is almost paradoxical because by revealing truths about the universe through the process of reduction (e.g. the scientist explains the universe by reducing it to the atom and then by reducing the atom to the electron) the scientist merely explains the world in terms of an image:

I realize...that you have been reduced to poetry. You have

³Franz Kafka, The Great Wall of China (N. Y.: Schocher Books, Inc., 1969), p. 30.

already changed theories. So that science that was to teach me everything ends up in a hypothesis, that lucidity founders in metaphor, that uncertainty is resolved in a work of art.⁴

Beckett seems to use Descartes as a jumping off point too. He changes Descartes' premise of "I think, therefore I am" to "I remain, therefore I am waiting for something."⁵ Faced with a need for unity in the world of this otherness, "all man is his lucidity and his definite knowledge of the wall surrounding him."⁶ Confined by Camus' "absurd walls", can man deal with meaninglessness or must he join the ranks of those who have died by their own hand in the darkness of despair? For Camus, "killing yourself amounts to confessing...that life is too much for you or that you do not understand it."⁷ In The Myth of Sisyphus he attempts to show that from the resources of nihilism a justification for continued existence can be found. If either the emotions or the intelligence is given free reign, the chariot of man will be destroyed by the absurd. However, through disciplined reason man can live in his world in the happiness

⁴Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays (N. Y.: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 15.

⁵Gunther Anders, "Being Without Time: On Beckett's Play Waiting For Godot" in Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays Edited by Martin Esslin (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965), p. 142.

⁶Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1955), p. 21.

⁷Ibid., p. 5.

of Sisyphus, the symbol of absurd man. Camus' reasoning which produces this conclusion is centred on the dialectic in which incomplete man confronts a silent universe producing an absurdity which is the only significance of existence. The consequences of this absurdity are a total absence of hope, a continual rejection of man's environment, and a conscious awareness of dissatisfaction with one's situation. The absurd eliminates the failure for man, and provides no return to innocence. It is the cause of anxiety for many and death for some, but for Camus it is the source of great inspiration. He thus rejects transcendental methods of overcoming the anxiety of modern life such as religion.⁸ And although Camus asserts that the world has no ultimate meaning, there is something in it which he claims does have meaning: and this is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having meaning. Gogo and Didi never separate; they do not move; yet they are. For purposes of illustration, Camus outlines three lifestyles of the absurd man.

Don Juanism represents to Camus, a realistic limitation of meaningfulness in the pursuit of love. Don Juan consciously accepts the inevitability of life's absurdity. He exists outside of time, not collecting women, but revel-

⁸c.f. Appendix B for Camus' views on religion, revolt and the consequences of the absurd.

ling in the experience of the ever-present Now. He has the freedom of recognizing that "there is no noble love but that which recognizes itself to be both short-lived and exceptional."⁹

The actor, as an archetypically absurd character, is also upheld by Camus. He lives his fame in the moment with no hope of future recognition:

Within three hours he must experience and express a whole exceptional life. That is called losing oneself to find oneself. In those three hours he travels the whole course of the dead-end path that the man in the audience takes a lifetime to cover.¹⁰

In all of his philosophy Camus exalts the role of the physiological body in living in which all actors make use.

The third type of absurd life held by Camus to be exemplary is that of the conqueror. He perceives in this man the initiator of a struggle which determines values by opposing strength. In his struggles, the conquerer wants all or nothing, for he is actually more engaged in conquering himself than what seems to be his opponent. He believes that "man is his own end. . . . If he aims to be something it is in this life."¹¹ His feats are not lasting and he recognizes

⁹Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1942), p. 55.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹Ibid., p. 65.

that death ends everything.

It is only through the recognition of our limitations that we can retrieve any kind of spatial or existential perspective. Mathematics goes almost bizarre when it attempts to deal with the infinitely small (the point) and the infinitely large. It is only through the finite and physical facts of our existence that we can affirm any meaning in the face of the mathematics of our predicament. Man must define his area of existence in terms of the fact that there is no point to existence. And man must define his perspective in terms of that which has no perspective. In Camus' novel The Plague, for example, man has no choice but to define his relationship to himself and his relationship to the human community in relation to that which is human, the plague itself. The only way a human being can find perspective in relation to the inhuman plague (both in and outside himself) is by defying it. Yet it is possible to affirm some sort of human values within the limitations that life imposes upon us. It is possible to have faith in something -- in Waiting For Godot, Didi and Gogo have faith that Godot will come. The deck might be stacked against us with fifty-two wild jokers, but our very perception of the joke of our deaths and the "living warmth" that grows out of that perception might be enough to call it "winning the game."

Out of the absurd, Camus feels, an artist must trans-

form the disorder into order, not to derive any absolute system or give definite answers. He has only to keep realizing the extreme importance of the individual moment, act, or person. There are no generalizations in creativity, and only a few in the form it takes.

The absurd man, like the artist, must create from reality by "correct creation" in terms of Camus' philosophy of the absurd. He must understand an individual in terms of his higher values and create a different form out of this experience. It might be said against this that not everyone is capable of being an artist, which may be true in the usual sense, but almost everyone is capable of more understanding which Camus thought led to the all-important creative living.

Art is the contrary of silence;
it is rooted in reality, therefore
it is communicable to all
men; it is an invitation to dialogue
and therefore to freedom.¹²

Perhaps the one thing that needs to be added (and it may be here that Camus would say it naturally refers back to the individual where all good theories go and is the ingredient that must be added to make an act truly creative) is humour. The laugh and dance of Yeats' poems

¹² Germain Bree, Camus (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1959), p. 248.

(All things fall and are built again
And those that build them are gay)¹³

shouted right into the mouth of the absurd with "gay glittering eyes" may give a bit of perspective and a chance to recognize the absurd in a different way.

Camus concludes his comments on art by saying, "I ask of absurd creation what I regarded from thought, revolt, freedom, and diversity."¹⁴ How does creation fit into the absurd point of view?

As Camus describes absurd reasoning in The Myth of Sisyphus he says, "The preceding merely defines a way of thinking. But the point is to live."¹⁵ Something very similar may be said about his way of creating. He delineates the nature of absurd creation and it is in order that he create this way.

Absurd man, as creator, does not seek to find answers or explanations. Gogo and Didi exemplify Camus' absurd man. They know in advance that there is no answer to the absurd confrontation of man and the world. The absurd creator does not seek to rationalize the irrational. In fact, that which

¹³W. B. Yeats, The Collected Poems (Toronto: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1967), p. 338.

¹⁴Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 20.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 72.

is unknown to man cannot even be called irrational for man does not know this. All that man knows is that he cannot use reason against that which he does not know. The universe then, is unreasonable.

The absurd creator cannot try to explain the character in his book or play. He must not attach symbolic importance to his images. The images may have allegorical meaning but there can be no well of meaning beneath it. The method of creation must be the same as the method of knowledge, that is, the method of analysis; "For the absurd man it is not a matter of explaining and solving, but of experiencing and describing."¹⁶

The absurd artist must be aware of his limitations. He must not "yield to the temptation of adding to what is described a deeper meaning than he knows to be legitimate."¹⁷ The awareness of limits is directly associated to the analytical method. In fact, the awareness of the limits of reason is what makes analysis necessary. Since the artist cannot know what lies behind facts, that is, experienced occurrences, or even if something does exist beyond the facts, but since in order to write the truth he must express only what he

¹⁶Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1955), p. 70.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 72.

knows, the artist must describe only.

The absurd work requires an artist conscious of these limitations and an art in which the concrete signifies nothing more than itself.¹⁸

It is not only the artist who is limited. Man himself is limited, that is to say, man is not absolutely free. Indeed to know absolute freedom is not important. The only freedom that is important is one's own limited freedom which can be known. The freedom of man is parallel to that of the prisoner or the individual in the midst of the state.¹⁹

What then are the bars which define freedom? "It is clear that death and the absurd are here the principles of the only reasonable freedom."²⁰ Death defines freedom in that man cannot will himself "to be." He is irretrievably doomed to death. His freedom is effectively destroyed by a wooden box and six feet of earth. The absurd is the confrontation of man and the universe. Man has a need or a desire to have clarity and meaning and the world doesn't give this to him. Man's desire to know the meaning of the world is always frustrated by the world; this is the absurd. The absurd defines life then, in that what is most desired cannot be had. Godot will never come. In view of this fact one is required

¹⁸Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1955), p. 72.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 42.

²⁰Ibid.

to arrange one's life either by an acceptance or an escape into a foggy, irrational faith, or a revolt. It is the awareness of man's limited freedom which compels the artist (Beckett in the case of the examples cited) who wishes to create an absurd work to express only that which is known and true and to refrain from lying in the form of explanations and interpretations.

The absurd creator must remember that his act of creation and the result are gratuitous. They do not represent some meaningful event. They merely come into being in the world for no intelligible reason. The work of art cannot be an escape. The work must not relinquish the creator or the reader's hold on what is true nor lead him into the quagmire of false hope or meaning. However, man must know what is true and the work of art must retain its integrity and transmit the feeling that it ultimately is gratuitous. The absurd work of art must have value in its existence rather than in its meaning.

If the artist is the man of integral awareness who grasps the implications of his actions as Camus suggests, then Beckett is a true artist. He is grasping the implications of the twentieth century man who will always reach for something and will not give in to the "nothing." And just as the creator cannot seek to make his creation an escape the absurd man cannot escape. Vladimir and Estragon will always

live in the illusion that Godot will come. And as long as they remain in that illusion, they will remain in a state of inaction.

Man must exist in the world. As man and the world exist, the conscious man will be aware of the absurd: that is, his need to know will be forever frustrated. The three: man, world, and absurd, exist together. To deny one is to deny all three. To deny the absurd is to deny life in its true form. To have a true knowledge of life, man must be aware of the absurd. If man is to exist, then he must exist in the face of the absurd world.

Camus ends his essay proper with the tale of Sisyphus. This mythic hero had been condemned by the gods to roll a huge rock up to the brow of a hill only to have it topple back to the bottom. Though there is clearly no hope for Sisyphus ever to leave Tartarus, he still continues to move the stone. Since the absurd, too, can never be conquered by man, the stubborn pride which makes Sisyphus go on despite apparent hopelessness is suggested as the proper attitude of man. However, in the face of absurd existence, "one must imagine Sisyphus happy."²¹

In a sense Beckett's theatre as shown in Waiting For

²¹Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1955), p. 91.

Godot is a dramatization of the ethics and the absurdity posed by Camus in the Myth of Sisyphus. In a situation from which there is no escape, where time ceases to exist, Sisyphus exercises the only choice of which he is master -- the choice of attitude. Beckett's tramps also exercise a choice even though purely on a mental plane but this enables them to participate in the situation. They do not kill themselves, thus they emphasize life itself as a value. It is through Beckett's tragicomedy that we are given a glimpse of the absurd, for the absurd itself takes man on a quest to make him aware of the ultimate realities of his condition, to shock him out of an existence which has become trite, mechanical and deprived of dignity. It is a quest like the one Lear journeys, where he must suffer physical torments and mental anguish in order to learn, to become wise. It is a search analogous to Nietzsche's Zarathustra who is awed that the saint in the forest has not heard that "God is dead." The theatre of the absurd is trying to come to terms with the implications of Zarathustra's message, searching for a way to include dignity and so confront a world which has become essentially absurd. The world is presented as being senseless and lacking a unifying principle. It expresses the anxiety and despair that man does not know his true nature and purpose.

Although it is not only French writers and artists

who revolted against the romanticists, France was the matrix for expounding this premise of despair. Jean-Paul Sartre in his essay "Forgers of Myths" writes about the aims of the French theatre of 1946:

The young playwrights of France do not believe that men share a ready-made "human nature" which may alter under the impact of a given situation. They do not think that individuals can be seized with a passion or a mania which can be explained purely on the grounds of heredity, environment, and situations. What is universal, to their way of thinking is ...the situations in which man finds himself; that is, not the sum total of his psychological traits but the limits which enclose him on all sides.

.....

That is why we feel the urge to put on the stage certain situations which throw light on the main aspects of the condition of man and to have the spectator participate in the free choice which man makes in these situations.

.....

This theatre does not give its support to any one "thesis" and is not inspired by any preconceived idea. All it seeks to do is to explore the state of man in its entirety and to present modern man a portrait of himself, his problems, his hopes, and his struggles. ...if it is to address the masses, the theatre must speak in terms of their most general preoccupations, dispelling their anxieties in the form of myths which anyone can understand and feel deeply.²²

²²Jean-Paul Sartre, "Forgers of Myths" in Playwrights on Playwriting Edited by Toby Cole (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1968), pp. 117-118.

Modern artists like T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus, Thomas Mann, Pablo Picasso, or Paul Klee, for example, have updated ancient mythological motifs²³ and presented them to us in the form of a revolt. The really significant revolt against reason took place within the last forty or fifty years with such works as Dostoevsky's Notes From the Underground and The Brothers Karamazov, Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, or Franz Kafka's The Trial.

Of course, there has never been a true Age of Reason, a time when everything made sense. Even in the darkest times, some men have embraced as an ideal Plato's famous symbol of Reason: the charioteer masterfully reigning in his two horses, passion and will. Today Plato's charioteer has become the fat cat in the back of the limousine; we are in the Age of Unreason, in Auden's "Age of Anxiety."

The works of today's artists simplify this Age of Anxiety just as the plays of post-World War II that Sartre

²³ e.g.: The Greek myth of Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from Olympus and gave it to man thus symbolizing the race's aspirations, even when they conflict with the powers of nature. e.g.: The Hebrew myth of the trials of Job, symbolizing man's submission to a power above nature, even when that power seems cruel and unjust. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac is the supreme symbol of the Hebrew attitude; that is, man's humble spiritual surrender to God's will.

recalls in his essay "reflect the preoccupation of a nation which must at one and the same time reconstruct and re-create and which is searching for new principles."²⁴

Today's artists reflect the paranoia of twentieth century man; they reveal man's preoccupation with such things as astrology, tarot cards, the literature of the occult, and drugs. The camera has practically created a genre of dis-integrating minds. Carnal Knowledge, Husbands, Straw Dogs, The Devils, A Clockwork Orange, all in different ways perform the basic ritual of the '70's film. Impulse to action -- no hesitation in between, no regret afterward -- is the basic premise. But, man thinks almost as naturally as he feels and he is therefore doomed to exceed himself. The absurd experience as defined by Camus, is that moment of lucidity when man sees that the myths are misleading, when he bears again the universal silence as does Camus' hero, Sisyphus and as do Beckett's hobos. In Camus' moment, in Beckett's pause, man realizes that the meaning of his being-in-the-world is not merely unknown, it is unknowable.

In the context of Waiting for Godot the one possession that Estragon and Vladirmir do retain is their reason. Like Sisyphus they too are silent and they must endure the torture test of time. Their situation has come to be iden-

²⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, "Forgers of Myths," in Playwrights on Playwrighting Edited by Toby Cole, p. 124.

tified with waiting and in such a case time becomes a threatening instrument of torture -- threatening the disintegration of reason. Be that as it may, time reveals to man the various possibilities that are implied in his future.

Waiting For Godot is hope's requiem. The two tramps, Estragon and Vladimir wait in vain.

When you are waiting for something, the slow course of time, the succession in the minutes is foremost in consciousness. Under such conditions you are comparing two points of time: the present and the goal of fulfillment.²⁵

Waiting is the real activity in all Beckett's totally passive characters. As in an electricity blackout where one waits for the light, so in Beckett's metaphysical and moral blackout one waits for new gods to replace the old.

And so the two tramps wait. They struggle to maintain their reason:

All I know is that the hours are long, under these conditions, and constrain us to beguile them with proceedings which -- how shall I say -- which may at first sight seem reasonable, until they become a habit. You may say it is to prevent our reason from foundering.
(p. 51b)

²⁵ Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U. of California Press, 1969), p. 362.

Estragon and Vladimir speak of moving often but they never leave the geographical space that they are now in. It is interesting to note that the two acts end in exactly the same way except that the role of the speakers are reversed:

Estragon: Well? Shall we go?

Vladimir: Yes, let's go.

(They do not move.) (p. 35b)

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go.

(They do not move.) (p. 60b)

Where would they go? It is this waiting, this subjugation of time, an essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition, that is the real subject of the play. Whether Godot is meant to be a supernatural agent who will intervene, or whether he is a mythical human being whose arrival will change the situation is not of real importance to an understanding of the play (i.e., either way "Godot" is intelligible and there are no grounds for preferring one reading to the other).

Man is constantly waiting for various objectives throughout his life, be they events, people, understanding, or death. As we wait time presses on relentlessly, and we constantly change with it, never being exactly the same at any moment of our lives. Hence,

We are disappointed at the nullity of what we are pleased to call attainment. But what is attainment? The identification of the subject with the object of

his desire. The subject has died --
and perhaps many times on the way.²⁶

If Godot is the object of Estragon and Vladimir's desire, he is naturally beyond their reach and they wait in vain. Life is short, time passes, yet Didi and Gogo go on waiting for Godot, although their appointment with him is uncertain, and they are not sure what he is to do for them when he does arrive. His coming may very well bring the flow of time to a stop.

An absurd situation -- perhaps. But this is what the Theatre of the Absurd and the world of Samuel Beckett assert. Martin Esslin says that it

shows the world as an incomprehensible place. The spectators see the happenings on the stage entirely from the outside, without ever understanding the full meaning of these strange patterns of events, as newly arrived visitors might watch life in a country of which they have not yet mastered the language.

.....

...Emotional identification with the characters is replaced by a puzzled, critical attention. For while the happenings on the stage are absurd, they yet remain recognizable as somehow related to real life with its absurdity, so that eventually the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence.²⁷

²⁶ Samuel Beckett, Proust, quoted by Esslin in the Theatre of the Absurd, p. 18.

²⁷ Martin Esslin, "The Theatre of the Absurd," Tulane Drama Review, 4 (Summer, 1960), p. 5.

PART II: APPLYING TIME-SPACE CONCEPTS
FROM LITERATURE

CHAPTER IV

KAFKA AND DREAM TIME

Time has changed through the centuries; in Whitehead's words:

in the past the time span of important change was considerably longer than that of a single human life. Thus, mankind was trained to adapt itself to fixed conditions.

Today this time span is considerably shorter than that of human life, and accordingly our training must prepare individuals to face a novelty of conditions.¹

In a sense our age has seen the conquest of space by time. We are no longer confined comfortably in Time between the limits of creation and the Day of Judgement. Our writers constantly make us aware of this fact.

For Franz Kafka, time and space as they appear are not necessarily real. Kafka's work is rather like a day-dream in which subject and object are one. Kafka deals with the dream as an abstraction. The Trial and The Castle are the dreams of K., told by Kafka not from the dreamer's

¹Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (N.Y.: Pelican Edition, 1933), p. 94.

point of view but from that of Kafka, who is awake and observing the dream. Hence, Kafka is able to impose order. What is real for Kafka is not the mental process, but the image produced by the mental process. This image stands beyond change and is subject to no past, present or future.

Erich Heller sees the relationship of Kafka's heroes to the truth for which they so desperately search, in terms of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" where Plato expresses man's pitiable ignorance about the true nature of the Ideas:

Chained to the ground of his cave,
with his back to the light,
all he perceives of the fundamental reality of the world is a play of shadows thrown on to the wall of his prison. But for Kafka there is a further complication: perfectly aware of his wretched imprisonment and obsessed with a monomaniac desire to know, the prisoner has, by his unruly behavior and his incessant entreaties, provoked the government of his prison to an act of malicious generosity. In order to satisfy his passion for knowledge they have covered the walls with mirrors which, owing to the curved surface of the cave, distort what they reflect. Now the prisoner sees lucid pictures, definite shapes, clearly recognizable faces, an inexhaustible wealth of detail. His gaze is no longer on empty shades, but on a full reflection of ideal reality. Face to face with the images of Truth, he is yet doubly agonized by their hopeless distortion. With an unparalleled fury of pedantry he observes the curve of every line, the ever-changing countenance of every figure,

drawing schemes of every possible aberration from reality which his mirror may cause, making now this angle and now that the basis of his endless calculation which, he passionately hopes, will finally yield the geometry of truth.²

Man is an existent being and his view of himself as he stands in relation to the world is a problem common to twentieth century man. Often his exploration is full of terror for the individual discovers his own apartness: he finds himself separated from the phenomenal world for which his needs -- emotional, physical, spiritual -- are not the evident cause. This alienation of the individual from the world forms a basic tenet in Kafka's novels and short stories, and in Beckett's theatre.

In Kafka's novel The Trial time is seen as an inner affair; it deals with no particular time or place, describes a world where past, present, and future are meaningless, explores the unreason of life in general, and uses motifs from the dream world of the author: courts, advocates, the room with the skylight. Kafka sees the outer world as meaningful only in terms of the observer. He objectifies inner reality without sacrificing any of its outward nature. Through the objectification of the

²Erich Heller, "The World of Franz Kafka" in Kafka: A Collection of Critical Essays, Edited by Ronald Gray (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p.99.

inner world, Kafka avoids the as if, for the dream, the fantasy, the world of the spirit exist for him. With Kafka the extraordinary does not appear extraordinary.

Kafka's ability to portray his dream-like inner life reaches its zenith in The Castle. One wintry night K., the protagonist, arrives in a snowy village dominated by the castle of Count Westwest. To the villagers at the local inn, K. declares himself to be the landsurveyor sent for by the Castle. The novel deals with K.'s repeated attempts to be admitted to the Castle. As the novel draws to an end, K. is still engaged in repeated nightmare-like attempts to reach the Castle. We know that these efforts will continue to be failures, and that eventually, worn down by the attempts, K. is to lie on his deathbed and finally receive word that he is not to be given access to the Castle itself. He will, however, be allowed to live at peace in the village. This plot summary does not do justice to the novel, but what I wish to emphasize is this. What Kafka does in The Castle is to abolish normal space and time values so that reality becomes that which exists in the mind, and is not independent of it. Past and present become integrated; they are bound together indistinguishably in the objects and shadows of his dream world.

Kafka's story The Metamorphosis reveals his strong

attachment to the inner world. His story is a tale of guilt, of fear, and of masochism in which the reader sees subject and object coincide in the figure of the beetle. The metamorphosis is accomplished with the bodily nature of the beetle being grasped from within, while the outside world is built up entirely from that embodiment. Kafka's Gregor Samsa is not independent of his cockroach form; Gregor is the beetle precisely because he thinks he is. No longer is he the insignificant commercial traveller; his new form is the pure expression of his personality. With Kafka we are inside the mind of Gregor Samsa and are forced to accept this world of Gregor and to recognize it as our own. Kafka exposes us to our own suppressed selves. The Kafkan hero

...acts out his unimportance by reducing his size, spatial range of movement, relationship to the objects around him, conscientious regard for a massive, deep, inexplicable authority. As he reduces himself, the space in which he lives loses its rational significations.³

In characterizing the Kafkan hero or self, I would say in one word it is contraction. Gregor Samsa contracts to form an insect and in doing so hides himself from the

³Frederick J. Hoffman, Samuel Beckett: The Language of Self (N. Y.: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1964), p. 44.

outside world and from himself.

Like Kafka, Beckett is also concerned with the self. But the Beckett hero is anxious to assure himself that there is a being definable as himself. There is a definite and optimistic will-to-live; yet, as Beckett remarks,

The individual is the seat of a constant process of decantation, decantation from the vessel containing the fluid of future time, sluggish, pale and monochrome, to the vessel containing the fluid of past time, agitated and multi-colored by the phenomena of its hours.⁴

It is here that man ceaselessly questions the terms of his selfhood. You have to lose yourself in order to find yourself. In becoming blind, Pozzo achieves a measure of freedom from spatial reality. His blindness is not to be thought of as a sign of physical decadence but as a stage in progress towards self discovery. The metamorphosis of the human form is downward toward the insect people of Kafka but though Pozzo is sightless he is not yet silent.

As it is for the reader of Kafka's novels and stories, Waiting For Godot acquires a universal significance and involves the audience in an act of reflection on the condition of man. As Ruby Cohn remarks:

⁴Samuel Beckett, Proust (N. Y.: Grove Press, 1957), pp. 4-5.

It is we who begin as the "betters" of Vladimir and Estragon, but our better actions and aspirations are aped and mocked by the waiters for Godot, until we see how frivolous they are.... In the tragic-comedy...there is an equation of plot with human situations, and the major meaning of the play lies in that equation, rather than in digressions upon God-ot.⁵

The plot that arises is a painful and brutal nightmare world: modern man no longer believes in himself as a self. The cruelty that is dramatized on the stage is clearly the spectator's own. From Beckett's work questions pummel through the audience member's mind and he finds to his horror that only metaphysical anguish exists:

What is there? I know first of all that I am. But who am I? All I know of myself is that I suffer. And if I suffer it is because at the origin of myself there is mutilation, separation.

I am separated. What am I separated from -- I cannot name it. But I am separated.⁶

When he does "find himself," the self that he finds is not his vital, real self, but his self objectified, frozen into an object. Hence we have Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis into a giant cockroach, or Ionesco's rhinoceroi-people, or

⁵Ruby Cohn, Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 211.

⁶Arthur Adamov, L'Aveu (1938), quoted in Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 67.

Beckett's hobos who are immersed in time and who are in desperate need of Godot. They seek refuge in the only entity that could save them; Godot is merely a projection outward of these two characters. And the anxiety deepens for us outside who observe the situation. The panic deepens of man who cannot find himself and who, when he does, finds himself in this way.

I hear Kafka's protagonist K.

I hear Beckett's tramps, Vladimir and Estragon.

They are calling out into the void; their words echo:

Where I am, I don't know,
I'll never know,
in the silence you don't know,
you must go on,
I can't go on,
I'll go on.⁷

⁷Samuel Beckett, The Unnamable in Three Novels by Samuel Beckett: Malloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable (N. Y.: Grove Press, Inc., 1965), p. 414.

CHAPTER V

MANN AND ETERNAL TIME

Thomas Mann is less inward in his treatment of time than Kafka. He has made the absence of the sense of the passage of time among a number of individuals the theme of The Magic Mountain. Here he is essentially concerned not with the events which befall the patients at the sanatorium in the Alps, nor even primarily with their thoughts and opinions, but rather with their isolation or insulation from the outer world and hence from time.

For Mann the concept of circular reality brought no escape from time but rather a discovery of eternity in time. Mann was strongly influenced by Nietzsche and by his concept of eternal recurrence. Eternal recurrence is, like la durée, a principle or pattern inherent in life itself. Nietzsche believed that life, time itself, was the supreme experience, even though it might lead to a discouraging round of repetition.

The beginning of Hans Castorp's education in time in The Magic Mountain comes early in the novel when he realizes that "time isn't 'actual.'" When it seems long to

you, then it is long; when it seems short, then it is short."¹ Time itself has no divisions; it is we who demarcate it. In the vacuum of Haus Berghof, the only time of any significance is the seven minutes when one holds the thermometer between one's lips. It is an integrated attitude toward time, one that sees that time is what the individual makes of it, that Mann achieves in The Magic Mountain.

For Beckett's tramps, the 'pin-points' of time gather together fragmentary impressions and straggling associations of life and give them a meaningful value. They are the flashes of intuition in the Bergsonian sense when the true durée which is reality can be felt.

But perhaps reality is unattainable. For if real time moves forward, illusory time moves in circles. And men are therefore doomed to eternal recurrence. Since we measure time by means of a circular motion, this motion might as well be described as rest. Each day is the same day in the rhythmic monotony of time's flow. As in Thomas Mann's novel, so in Beckett's play, time becomes both the subject and the medium of the narrative. It is interesting to note that at one point in his novel, Mann draws a line between the plastic arts, and music and poetry, showing that

¹Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain. Translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter. (N. Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 66.

whereas the plastic arts exist in the shortest instant of the present, music and poetry need duration in which to exist. He goes on to say that with music the time element is single, whereas in literature there is the time of the piece itself and the time of the content.²

Time is the dimension of change.
It helps describe change, and
does not exist without it. In
a universe in which all action
had ceased, there would be no
more time.³

In life, everyone carries his own time-system about with him. The two tramps arrive at the trysting place by chronological time -- time by the clock. Pozzo constantly consults his watch. (c.f. p. 24b) Time springs from man's needs and his desires to satisfy them. Vladimir and Estragon wait impatiently for what seems like years by psychological time -- their own private clock which measures time by values and intensity. As they wait, they recall various happenings by an act of memory which is not a mechanical reconstruction or a recapitulation of the past as it was but is rather an emotionally charged interpretation of events which changes and shifts as the interpreting self grows in time and is altered by it.

²Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, pp. 541-542.

³Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye, p. 362.

Strangely, Gogo and Didi are outside of time -- they have little memory. And memory is a function of intentionality. (c.f. p. 39b) They are living in the present. But exactly because they are cut off from the process and interrelations of history, they cannot break through to the external Now, the infinite. And it is only outside of time (and space) that the self may exist free from any chance event. However, the attempt to reach eternity is an infinite process, for time partakes both of eternity and of temporality. Although the tramps constantly dream of a life of silence, they betray their ideal through their need for words, movement and action, as though the thought of unfilled time is unbearable to them. So long as man needs another to talk about himself to, to impose himself on, he is an actor assuming a role, and living not within himself but for an audience. That is why Vladimir and Estragon can invade each others inner spaces and bind themselves to each other, for if this was not possible, their gestures and words would be meaningless.

To pass the time they play games. Games become a substitute for life and the loss of purpose. In order to participate in this encounter with the absurd, the two tramps must hold on to their consciousness, even though madness would be a refuge. To muffle the pain that time imposes on them they enact a sequence of variations upon

a theme, building its impact by intensification through accumulation. Waiting is circular, just as a habit is circular. When habit returns in the shape of Godot's messenger Vladimir's faith in his illusion is rekindled. In this world of illusion their whole existence is an attempt to pass the time, to wait, to avoid coming to grips with reality. One or the other is constantly suggesting something to do to pass the time: making conversation, "repenting," hanging themselves, telling stories, insulting one another, playing at being Pozzo and Lucky, trying to imitate Lucky's dance which they call "doing the tree." All these games are failures; they can succeed at nothing, they can only continue waiting for Godot, who never comes.

And waiting means hurrying on ahead, it means regarding time and the present not as a boon, but as an obstruction; it means making their actual content null and void, by mentally over-leaping them. Waiting, we say, is long. We might just as well -- or more accurately, say it is short, since it consumes whole spaces of time without our living them or making any use of them as such. We may compare him who lives on expectation to a greedy man, whose digestive apparatus works through quantities of food without converting it into anything of value or nourishment to his system. We might also go so far as to say that, as undigested food makes man no stronger, so time spent in waiting makes him no older passing the time! But in practice, of course, there is hardly such a thing as pure and unadulterated waiting.⁴

⁴Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 239.

But however weakened the subjective perception of it has become, time has objective reality in that it brings things to pass. Hence for Gogo and Didi, time has no objective reality -- nothing happens. Their dialogue and actions are endless and redundant; they seemingly are reduced to gestures with no meaning, yet the responsibility for the quality of the gesture is in each case its raison d'être⁴. The actions and the talk are isolated but are expressions of the supreme fact of isolation. The treadmill goes on and time turns upon itself like Vladimir's meaningless song about the dog that keeps eating and dying eternally. The circular effect begins by playing on the vulnerability of the spectators' memories but goes on to create a dazzling theatrical illusion which is the product of both the humane heart and the highly disciplined mind. Time has reached its stop, one day is identical with another, a lifetime has become an instant, and still the tramps wait. Past, present and future blend into what seems to be an eternity of waiting, not only for Beckett's hobos, but for all of mankind. I hear Mann's protagonist Hans Castorp. I hear Beckett's tramps, Vladimir and Estragon. They are calling out into the void; their words echo:

Where I am, I don't know,
 I'll never know,
 in the silence, you don't know,
 you must go on,
 I can't go on,
 I'll go on.⁵

⁵ Samuel Beckett, The Unnamable, in Three Novels by Samuel Beckett, p. 414.

PART III: APPLYING TIME-SPACE CONCEPTS FROM ART

CHAPTER VI

CUBISM AND FRAGMENTED TIME

Artistic movements such as cubism and futurism tried to enlarge our optical vision by introducing the new unit of space-time into the language of art.

The cubists sought to create on canvas, space and its object as they "saw" it, as it "seemed," not as they remembered it from tactile, kinetic, and pragmatic experience. It was in Paris, around 1910 that this method of presenting spatial relationships was developed by the cubists.

Cubism itself is not the invention of any one individual. It seems to be rather the expression of a collective and almost unconscious attitude. The cubists did not seek to reproduce the appearance of objects from one vantage point; they went round them and tried to lay hold of their internal constitution. Their quest was to visualize the objective world from many sides simultaneously, rather than from a fixed position. They sought to extend the scale of feeling. This led to the appearance of fragmentation, where images were symbolized by fragments of real objects -- the scroll of a violin, for example, being a metaphor for music.

It also led to the dissecting of objects in order to see things simultaneously from all sides -- from above and below, from inside and outside. Thus the cubists go inside their objects, adding to the three dimensions of Renaissance perspective, a fourth dimension -- that of time.

Gertrude Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas reveals a cubist literary style. Her very device of writing a memoir in the third person through the eyes of another relates the work to the multiple-perspective world of the cubists.

Although Beckett's play fairly bristles with archetypal symbols, it relies for its main form and meaning on simple patterns and objects. In a cubistic way, the hat for example, goes through a kaleidoscope of metaphysical meanings.

In Lucky's speech¹ the hat symbolizes the ability to think. His great monologue can be viewed as his spiritual death for when we see him next in the second act he is dumb. What comes out is a lifetime of thought, a lifetime of impressions, including his thoughts as a child. Fragments of sound from the playwright's and the audience's past, repre-

¹For an extensive breakdown of Lucky's speech a good article to read is Anselm Atkins' "Lucky's Speech in Beckett's Waiting For Godot: A Punctuated Sense-Line Arrangement" in the Educational Theatre Journal (Dec., 1967), pp. 426-432.

senting all those jumbled impressions and half-forgotten sensations are recalled. (Beckett here makes use of scatological imagery: e.g.: "Acacacacademy," "Anthropopometry," "Testew and Cunard," "Fartov and Belcher.") Beckett reveals that waste is the sole process of Nature in a wasting universe.

Lucky's speech is a summation of history without God. It is also the thought of all men until eventually, as the end of his speech or the end of his mental life comes, the images pour forth so fast that his mind becomes confused; his mind can no longer hold the flood of images that have to be poured forth before death arrives. Pozzo "kills" Lucky by taking off his hat. Lucky comes on in the next act with a new hat, but there is no new mind in it. The playing with hats, the struggling with boots, the effective symbolic leashing together of Pozzo and Lucky seems merely to serve the purpose of holding the audience's attention.

The symbol of the rope is important for it is a visible sign of Pozzo and Lucky's life's structure (the master-slave relationship). Yet it is also similar to the bond that might possibly unite the tramps to Godot for are they not waiting to be taken over by Godot? The idea of salvation without any concrete content is suddenly actualized by the rope that ties Lucky to Pozzo:

If salvation consists in being possessed by Godot, the desire to meet Godot and the repulsion provoked by the rope would be the two poles of a fundamental hesitation, a movement back and forth comparable to that which attracts the two tramps to one another and then separates them. Here again is the tragic circle, similar to that in existentialist drama: the vacuum of freedom calls for something to fill it, for the nothingness is unbearable; but when total commitment of possession is realized, the resulting state is just as agonizing. Man is caught between the vacuum of waiting for Godot and the bondage of a Lucky (the lucky one who has found his Godot).²

Tenderness, need, and hate are the psychological components of the bond. While the characters are bound by the recognition of their common misery, the bond never transforms that misery. The rope merely ties the spectators to the actors for the spectators' life is directly concerned. The spectator is drawn in as a participant; he becomes a witness to the characters' conflict and so becomes an actor in the play. Thus there is a correspondence established between our lives in the world and the essence of theatre, where, paradoxically, what is performed is both reality and a game and requires both participation and detachment.

²Jacques Guicharnaud "Existence on Stage" in On Contemporary Literature Edited by Richard Kostelanetz (N. Y.: Avon Books, 1969), pp. 273-274.

CHAPTER VII

FUTURISM AND KINETIC TIME

Futurism, a movement that originated among Italian artists had a short but energetic existence. The movement was initiated by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's "Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism" in 1909. Other artists involved were Uberto Boccioni and Giacomo Balla. These artists¹ were dedicated to the plastic exploration of motion. They maintained that, owing to traditional concern for the static concreteness of objects and forms, painting had failed to give the sensation of dynamism -- that is, the time-space relationship of objects in motion. Time, reduced to instants, becomes space, or a succession of an agglomeration or a confusion of spaces. The futurists cry was life -- explosive life, movement, action.

In the "Second Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting"(1912), the futurists developed their principal discovery that

objects in motion multiply and distort themselves, just as do vibrations, which indeed they

¹c.f. Appendix C, Futurist Theatre.

are, in passing through space.²

The futurists undertook to display this relationship in several ways. The classic example shows an animal in motion, its legs and perhaps even its tail in simultaneously overlapping positions.

...the difference between the so-called space arts and time arts is merely one of emphasis. In a painting or statue the permanent balance of the total "thing" is built of the actions of forces, which attract and repel each other, push in particular directions, manifest themselves in spatial sequences of shape and color. On the contrary, in a dance or play an over-all action is built of things which are defined by what they do. Thus one kind of artistic medium defines acting through being; the other defines being through acting. Together they interpret existence in its twofold aspect of permanence and change.

An example will illustrate this point. The forces represented in a painting are defined primarily by space. The direction, shape, size, and location of the shapes that carry them determine where these forces apply; where they go, how strong they are. The expanse of space and its structural features -- such as, for example, its center -- serve as a frame of reference for the characterization of forces. On the contrary, the space of a theatre or dance stage is defined by the motor forces that populate it.

²Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture, p.

Expanse becomes real when the dancer runs across it; distance is created by actors withdrawing from each other; and the particular quality of central location is brought to light when embodied forces strive for it, rest at it, rule from it. In short, the interaction of space and force is interpreted with different emphasis.³

One technique that Beckett uses to communicate this view of human life is to integrate habitual action with a language that constantly revolves upon itself. The element of repetitiousness is brought into play by Vladimir who opens the second act by singing a ballad. It is the story of a dog who came into the kitchen and stole a crust of bread but was clubbed to death with a ladle by the cook, whereupon the other dogs buried him and put upon his tomb a white cross bearing the legend: "A dog came in the kitchen..." (p. 37a) The very endlessness of the song makes it both comical and haunting, suggesting inescapability as well as perpetuation. The song vibrates; the audience's ears are assailed and their memories made active. The effect is similar to the futurist's drawing of an animal in motion.

Language becomes inadequate as a medium for the discovery and communication of metaphysical truth. This

³Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye, p. 365.

logical "truth" becomes intensified only in silence. For Beckett language has become void, therefore words can only demonstrate their emptiness. Negation is but a technique of Beckett's art, and "silence is the apocalyptic project he entertains for human consciousness."⁴ Religion and metaphysics have lost their authority, hence we shall continue to wait for Godot. As the inaction of Godot is kinetic, so too is the silence; the play is but a construct of words devised upon an absence or a void. The stage directions, Silence and Pause pervade the play; silence becomes force in space for it is here that the human consciousness reflects upon itself. The dramatic impulses at work causing the void, the waiting becomes most overpowering; normal actions or words would only negate the effect for indeed to vary an old cliché, silence speaks louder than words. But as Beckett's heroes repeat words and vary actions ad nauseam the spectator is invited to co-perform his gesture in a vacuum, to objectify that which most fully defines him.

⁴Ihab Hassan, The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 138.

PART IV: APPLYING THEATRICAL CONCEPTS

CHAPTER VIII

SCHECHNER AND PERFORMANCE TIME

When we speak of "time" in theatrical terms we normally mean performance time. Richard Schechner in his excellent book Public Domain: Essays on the Theatre suggests that there are varieties of performance time:

1. Event time. The activity has a set form and all steps within that form must be completed no matter how long (or short) the elapsed clock time.

Examples: Baseball, racing. Rituals in which a response or a "state" is sought, such as rain dances, cures effected by shamans, or revival meetings. A theatrical performance, taken as a whole.

2. Set time. An arbitrary time pattern is imposed on the events -- they begin and end at a certain moment or a set span of time is fixed for their performance. Here, frequently, there is a "race against the clock."

Examples: Football, basketball (in which overtimes allow for the game to be completed). Games structured on "how many" or "how much" you can do in N time. Task-oriented happenings such as Ann Halprin's Esponsizione. Religious observances that go down from "the beginning" to dusk or which begin at dawn, and so on.

3. Symbolic time. The span of the activity represents another (longer or shorter) duration of clock time.

Examples: Theatre, Rituals of enactment. Make-believe children's play.¹

Schechner enlarges on what he means by "symbolic time." He says that it

has the qualities of "normal" clock time. It is "symbolic" because the hours onstage are different in correspondence and duration from the "real" hours registered on the clock backstage. Symbolic time can be shortened, lengthened, or inverted.²

To this breakdown of performance time, Schechner adds two more types, circular time and bracketed time. Circular time he defines as "a series of events, one necessarily following the other, contained in a single unit that necessarily repeats itself."³ He cites Ionesco's The Lesson as an example of a play using circular time.

The pupil enters, the professor greets her, they add, she is successful, they subtract, she fails, she can multiply but cannot divide, he becomes agi-

¹Richard Schechner, Public Domain: Essays on the Theatre (N. Y.: Avon Books, 1969), pp. 87-88.

²Ibid., p. 89.

³Ibid.

tated and begins lecturing her on "philology," she gets a toothache, wishes to go but cannot find the energy to move, he teaches her how to pronounce "knife," she hurts all over, he rapes and kills her, her corpse is disposed of (along with thirty-nine others), a new student rings the bell -- "Good morning, miss! You are the new pupil? You have come for the lesson? The Professor is expecting you."⁴

Bracketed time is similar to circular time but with this difference:

the events within a set do not necessarily follow one another in the same order, nor are the same events necessarily repeated each time. Any day is an example of bracketed time. ...Actions occur within the bracket dawn-dark but they have no necessary relation to each other. The bracket itself gives these events the appearance of relatedness.⁵

Waiting for Godot is Schechner's example of a play which uses bracketed time.

The action of Godot consists in Gogo and Didi's inventing games to pass the time -- they are struggling toward the terminus of their bracket. The specific things that Gogo and Didi do are variations of event time. Pozzo and Lucky have a different time pattern -- one more recognizably "organic." Pozzo and

⁴ Richard Schechner, Public Domain, pp. 89-90.

⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

Lucky have "careers." In the second act, Pozzo is near the end of his career, and his rage comes directly from the conflict between his ever-shortening sense of time and Gogo's and Didi's sense of event time. ...Gogo and Didi do not measure time -- they cannot calibrate it. They live entirely in a world of event time governed by set time (the dusk-dark bracket). In their world night falls suddenly, without warning: an announcement that Godot is not coming. ...Time for them passes unevenly, depending upon whether or not they are distracted by their games, routines, habits, and memories. Time for them comes in bursts or lingers, clustered around events and lack of events.⁶

Herbert Blau considers the movement of Godot not bracketed like Schechner, but circular, "like a worn-out wheel of fortune at a deserted fairground, mysteriously turning."⁷ In such terms I picture the movement of Godot like that of Joni Mitchell's song, "The Circle Game":

And the seasons they go round and round
 And the painted ponies go up and down
 We're captive on the carousel of time
 We can't return we can only look behind
 From where we came
 And go round and round and round
 In the circle game.

Having come out of history like shadows, the tramps are

⁶Richard Schechner, Public Domain, pp. 90-91.

⁷Herbert Blau, The Impossible Theatre (N. Y.: Collier Books Ltd. and London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1964), p. 232.

nothing but the concrete fact of the time they pass.

And the question of Time in the theatre is limned in their every gesture. Time-in-space. If the landscape needs one of them, the one needs the other. And, as we sit superior to their impotence, our whole past vibrates in their ready presence.⁸

Richard Schechner has charted the several qualities which are shared between play, games and sports, theatre and ritual.⁹ We see in Schechner's Performance Chart that theatre has more in common with games and sports than with play or ritual. (Happenings and environmental theatre, however, relate more to play than anything else.) The space, for example, is organized so that a large group can watch a small group and yet become aware of itself at the same time.

It is this concept of play between audience and actor, between character and actor, and as a theatrical piece, that is important. In an article called "Form and Meaning in the Visual Arts" by William H. Bosart there is an interesting discussion on the characteristics of play. Mr. Bossart cites Johan Huizinga as his source for the following definitions:

⁸Herbert Blau, The Impossible Theatre, p. 232.

⁹See Appendix D for Schechner's Performance Chart.

The first essential characteristic of play., is that it is voluntary activity. Play to order is not play. Play, then is an expression of freedom, and closely connected with this is the fact that play is not "ordinary" or "real" life. "It is rather a stepping out of 'real' life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own. Every child knows perfectly well that he is 'only pretending,' or that it was 'only for fun' Nevertheless, ... the consciousness of play being 'only a pretend' does not by any means prevent it from proceeding with the utmost seriousness, with an absorption, a devotion that passes into rapture and, temporarily at least, completely abolishes that troublesome 'only' feeling. Any game can at any time wholly run away with the players." Yet play remains disinterested in the sense that it stands outside the immediate wants and appetites of ordinary life. Play is also distinct from ordinary life as to both locality and duration. "It is 'played out' within certain limits of time and place. It contains its own course and meaning....Once played, it endures a treasure to be retained by the memory. It is transmitted, it becomes tradition.

Finally, there is an element of tension in play. "Tension means uncertainty, chanciness; a striving to decide the issue and so end it. The player wants something to 'go', to 'come off'; he wants to 'succeed' by his own exertions. ...Though play as such is outside the range of good and bad, the element of tension imparts to it a certain ethical value in so far as it means a testing of the player's prowess ... because, despite his ardent desire to win, he must still stick to the rules of the game." The player who breaks these rules is

the "spoil-sport" who "shatters the play-world itself." By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its illusion -- a pregnant word which means literally 'in-play' (from inlusio, illudere or indludere).¹⁰

In Waiting for Godot all the characters in the play are performing artists and there are several indications within the script that the play is a play:

Vladimir: Charming evening we're having.
 Estragon: Unforgettable.
 Vladimir: And it's not over.
 Estragon: Apparently not.
 Vladimir: It's only beginning.
 Estragon: It's awful.
 Vladimir: Worse than the pantomime.
 Estragon: The circus.
 Vladimir: The music-hall.
 Estragon: The circus.
 (p. 23b)

They express awareness of being in a play, even of being spectators in a play:

Estragon: End of the corridor, on the left.
 Vladimir: Keep my seat.
 (p. 23b)

Life is a game. We take the play seriously and so we're "bloody ignorant apes." (p. 9b) But the tramps know they're playing. Do we?

When Estragon seeks to escape backstage, Vladimir

¹⁰ William H. Bossart "Form and Meaning in the Visual Arts" in Aesthetics and the Arts by Lee A. Jacobus, pp. 14-15.

cries out, "Imbicile! There's no way out there." (p. 47b) Blind Pozzo asks if they are on the Board. In spite of his burdens, Lucky's job is not to carry, but to play the buffoon; he is a spectacle for Vladimir and Estragon; he dances and thinks at Pozzo's command. Pozzo, in turn, is anxious for audience acclaim; he sprays his throat before speaking: "Is everybody looking at me? . . . Is everybody listening! . . . I don't like talking in a vacuum." (p. 20b)

Vladimir and Estragon play at exercises, questions, contradictions, insults; they play at being Pozzo and Lucky. The perpetual pulling off and putting on of boots, the going and coming, the eating, the waiting, all this is amusing stage business, that has in its monotony, infinite variety, but ultimately leaves the impression of all the futility of man's busyness, in the face of the obstinate universe, to be fit into any logical pattern.

Perhaps we as human beings have learned to obliterate time, or to ignore it, or to manage it, or to penetrate it, or even to transcend it. Yet in Beckett's play we see time for what it is -- the implacable bringer of the death that ends our games.

CHAPTER IX

THEATRE AS FRAGMENTED TIME

Theatrical time implies the time of the performance -- the play as "taking place" on such and such an evening at a particular time and place. That very phrase "taking place" is a metaphor which conceives of time, in potential, as a series of fragmented units waiting to be filled up with action. Within the play, time is not that of the watch-wearing spectator, but it is rather the synthesis of the time of the anecdote that is played out and the time of "All of Life."¹ Time then becomes a series of "places" waiting to be inhabited or "taken up" by events since waiting contains all of its dimensions at every moment. The drama which Beckett has created is merely a means of filling up time. Vladimir and Estragon live, eat, suffer, dance, perform clownish tricks. Within each act an almost sexual rhythm forms within a series of moments that start an assertion, a plan, a hope, and each time quickly dissipate it. Their gestures and words take place in the flow of normal time, but lose their finality

¹Jacques Guicharnaud, "Existence on Stage" in On Contemporary Literature Edited by Richard Kostelanetz, p. 264.

due to the incessant "waiting for Godot." The tramps act in order to avoid thinking about their condition; they act merely to fill up a vacuum. Their experiences dissolve into the great hollow abyss that "goes round and round and round in the circle game." Consequently the play's result is apparent inaction despite innumerable happenings.

Nevertheless, in the theatre, such an aspect of time (here the spectator is being asked to recognize an image of his own conditions), is significant only to us as people, for we ourselves, or other people, are "involved" in this time fragment -- during the play people are in part defined by the play and the play is defined by the people.

The Spanish playwright, Lope de Vega, once stated that the only requirement for theatre is "two boards and a passion." I would add two other essentials: a performer and at least one spectator. In order for there to be a play at all, there must be people present who are to some degree involved in the play. At the same time the people who are involved in the play-time-fragment must be subdivided into at least two groups fulfilling differing but related functions. One of these sub-divisions is called the "audience" who traditionally watch the play, listen to the play, or participate in at least some aspects of the play in a manner which can be differentiated to some degree from another

group of people called the "actors" who traditionally perform the play or in some way lead or precede the audience in their participation in the play. Like the spectator, the actor must develop a certain aesthetic sensibility; he must be simultaneously both a detached spectator and a passionate performer.

At this point we have a definable group of people related to one another in terms of a fragment of time which has a beginning and an end. However, they are obviously not suspended during this time fragment. They are people whose lives are partially defined in terms of a time fragment -- and people in time necessitate some sort of activity, for without activity we are unable to apply the word time.

In the theatre a play acquires a certain three-dimensional form in rehearsal but it does not "come to life" without the spectator. The play, as it is performed, is merely half of the "theatrical experience." To become fully realized the spectator must be drawn into the world on the stage and linked inextricably to it.

Now, if we accept Camus' premise of man being "absurd," then we must also acknowledge the fact that man is aware of the "absurd walls" or limits that Camus speaks of. The spectator's limits are those that his rational faculties

impose upon him, but, being free, he is able to suspend them. It is only the critic, the one who judges and questions, who refuses to enter the reality on stage. Beckett seems to sense this for in Waiting for Godot Estragon's worst insult in the name-calling game is to refer to Vladimir as a critic:

Vladimir: Ceremonious ape!
 Estragon: Punctilious pig!
 Vladimir: Finish your phrase, I tell you!
 Estragon: Finish your own!
 Silence. (They draw closer, halt.)
 Vladimir: Moron!
 Estragon: That's the idea, let's abuse each other.
 (They turn, move apart, turn again and
 face each other.)
 Vladimir: Moron!
 Estragon: Vermin!
 Vladimir: Abortion!
 Estragon: Morpion!
 Vladimir: Sewer-rat!
 Estragon: Curate!
 Vladimir: Cretin!
 Estragon: (with finality) Crrritic!
 Vladimir: Oh!
 (He wilts, vanquished, and turns away.)
 (p. 48b)

The ideal or total spectator however, responds both viscerally and mentally and hence can partake of the activity on stage.

Of course, someone must decide where the beginning of the activity should be and where its end should be -- it might even be the actors or the audience; it might be pre-determined by a director or a scriptwriter either in terms of clock time, natural occurrence or chance -- but someone must structure at least the beginning and the end of the activity.

Most plays involve many people who add to the structure of a play and all are in a sense playwrights. For any person or groups of people who make a decision as to how the human activity of the play is to be structured are in a very real sense "playwrights" -- that is, makers of the play, moulders of the human activity that takes place during the play. Any person who has anything to do with forming the play into the shape that takes place is, in that role a "playwright." And every play has many playwrights. They fall into two groups: the "pre-play group" and the "play-per se group." The pre-play group includes the scriptwriter-playwright, the director-playwright, the designer-playwright, and the technician-playwright. The actor-playwright is in this group and is also in the second play-per se group along with the audience. Of course the essential guide which these two groups depend on is the scriptwriter-playwright, traditionally referred to as the playwright.

If we accept the metaphor that describes time as a series of fragments, then within this context it is legitimate to speak of smaller fragments within those fragments. For example, if we speak of the tramps waiting (and waiting is an aspect of time), then we can speak of the gestures, the dialogue, the games that occur during their eternal wait. By extension, therefore, just as the play is defined in terms of all the activities that take place in the time-fragment, so

too each smaller fragment or unit is defined in terms of the particular human activity that occupies its space. In some plays, the author decides not only what the time-action units will be but he also decides their temporal and causal relationships to one another.

In conventional drama all details converge on the center of action. We may call this kind of structure centripetal. In Godot the action is centrifugal. Gogo/Didi do their best to shield themselves from a direct consciousness that they are at the appointed place at the prescribed time. If the center of the play is Time, dozens of activities and capers fling Gogo/Didi away from this center. But events at the periphery force them back inward: try as they will, they are not able to forget. ...Caught on the hub of this wheel, ... Gogo/Didi literally have nowhere to go outside of this tight scheme. The scenic counterpart is the time-bracket "dusk-darkness" -- that portion of the day when they must be at the appointed place.²

In a sense, we have come to the theatre for curtain time to see and hear a play about Time and its effects. Waiting for Godot is the perfect example of fragmented theatre time for each gesture, each line of dialogue, each pause in Beckett's script are in effect, spokes in the wheel of Time or time-fragments, small as they may be, each suf-

²Richard Schechner, "There's Lots of Time in Godot" in Casebook on Waiting For Godot Edited by Ruby Cohn. (N. Y.: Avon Books, 1970), pp. 185-186.

ficient to itself. Each stage stimulus serves to remind the spectator of his own limited assertions, his own fragmentary existence. The stage becomes a mirror which reflects and refracts but allows participation.

CHAPTER X

PLAY-WRIGHTS AND TRIANGULATION

In Waiting For Godot we are no longer aware of time as progressive; instead we experience only a kaleidoscopic present where time is both psychological and malleable. The linear time scheme is

not...denied in an ultimate sense;
but it is completely disregarded
in the attempt to redress the stupor
and unconsciousness of the present
moment. If life as we know it, or
imagine we know it, is made horribly
unrecognizable by theatrical tricks
and gimmicks, it may be in order to
bring us to a recognition of life
as it is. We may be saved by first
being damned.¹

And although the "meaning" or "theme" of the play does not emerge from the linear relationship of time-action units but rather from the interplay of them all taken in totality, nevertheless, this linear relationship must be adhered to since the play depends on it as the vehicle of recognizable and sensible reality that the audience needs in order to be touched by the author's theme or intent. For if the play

¹John Killinger, World in Collapse: The Vision of Absurd Drama (N. Y.: Dell Publishing Co., 1971), p. 134.

fails to "hold" a spectator, it may be because he was in some way not aware of any reality. If the audience is to triangulate,² the first triangulation takes place between what is inside them and what is presented to them on stage; then they proceed to synthesize. What is presented on the stage must be congruent with their previous understanding of reality or they are missing one step in the triangulation process. If the "sense" of what happens on the stage depends on an exact relationship between time-action units it must be adhered to or the audience is given nothing with which to triangulate.

We must recognize too that the director-actor-designer combination might have an intent other than that of the author. Even there they are limited to the basic framework. For again, the basic framework is only recognizable to the audience insofar as the relationship between the time-action units is adhered to. There are, of course, many variables within the framework. The author's characters are after all fictional, so many details of appearance, dress, voice, tone, setting, stress, and movement are left

²Triangulation is the dialectical process undertaken whereby an audience synthesizes visual and verbal stimuli, i.e., in Susanne Langer's terms, discursive and presentational symbols. c.f. Philosophy in a New Key. New York: New American Library, 1951, Chapter V passim.

to the other theatrical play-wrights. So, even though the basic time relationship between line and line, action and action, and line and action are fixed, this is no reason to say that every final play produced on the basis of a script will be the same or even similar. There are many variables that are left to the imagination and play-writing skill of the actors, directors, designers, et al.

For example, in the first production of Waiting For Godot in Paris, Roger Blin chose to stress the traditional elements of Beckett's play.

The acting was similar to the inner realism of the Stanislavsky method. As a result, the spectator's participation was increased, the misery of the characters made more striking, the tension between a life similar to ours and an indifferent and forgetful universe made more convincing and more poignant.

On another level, the spectator participates because that slice of a tramp's life is charged with human suffering; and even if he does not identify with the characters, he is bound to be sensitive to the spectacle of misery in general.³

This "spectacle of misery" is set up in two distinct spaces; one which is described by the characters/actors in Beckett's

³Jacques Guicharnaud, "Existence on Stage" in On Contemporary Literature Edited by Richard Kostelanetz, p. 268.

dialogue, the other which an audience immediately perceives upon walking into the actual theatre -- the stage, that space set out in front of the viewer which has been planned by the designer and technicians in collaboration with the director. But it is up to the actor to clarify this space and make its reality distinct and lucid for an audience.

CHAPTER XI

DESIGNER AS PLAY-WRIGHT

The modern theatre designer is involved in finding a means of understanding and visually communicating given plays. He realizes that the playwright's source of inspiration is his own perception of the world upon which he then makes his statement or comment, thus creating his own world, his own order. The designer must attempt to understand this world that the playwright "sees," a world in constant flux with everchanging viewpoints and philosophies and the choices that the playwright has imposed upon its chaotic condition. The only information he has are the playwright's words which therefore should become the major controlling factor in the designer's creative process.

He must understand the levels that the playwright is operating on in a scale that moves from reality to fantasy, where reality is the world that the average person of today, when presented with it in the theatre, would accept as his, and fantasy is this world on a mythical level, a level of great selectivity and compactness that is involved in immediate or total awareness if only on an intuitive level.

The designer must realize the tremendous power of

the word; the stage is a physically empty space, full of the potential energy of the world and controlled by the text of the play. The only thing, in the final analysis, that can survive on the stage is that which is determined by the text. Thus, for an organic visual interpretation of the play, the designer must fully comprehend the playwright's own particular use of dialogue. This varies from playwright to playwright and often demands totally different approaches. In an understanding of these words a process of analysis must take place. This may be largely intuitive, where images immediately appear for the designer when the play is read. In most plays a sense of the times of the world that the playwright was living in when writing, is inherent in the dialogue. In others, it is an illusive thing and almost impossible to analyze. It possibly has to do with the actual attitude of the words or the juxtaposition of their sequences; nevertheless, it is there.

The text of the play performs several functions. It is a means of communication, an indication of character and action and a controller of time -- the latter being the most important to a designer. Dialogue as a time element, transmitted by a moving actor becomes sound in space that unites and motivates the spatial design elements of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Sound moves along a scale from a simple statement of character or action to pure rhythm or

music -- beyond dialogue -- always remaining, in some way, as a time element. A telephone in a realistic play would function as it does in real life -- as a communication device. It would look real and exist in a totally real environment. In the world of Tom Stoppard's Real Inspector Hound the telephone functions quite differently. The maid answers the phone with, "Hello, the drawing room of Lady Muldoon's country residence one morning in early spring." Immediately, the realistic levels of telephone to telephone table, telephone table to chair, chair to rug, rug on floor relationship is shattered by this send up of dialogue, and the telephone symbol and space is immediately changed.

In Beckett's play Waiting For Godot the tree is an important symbol. Though merely a stage prop, it functions, in fact, as a character. The tree as a tree is a total failure. In Act I it is just a skeleton tree, stunted and bearing no leaves. Vladimir calls the tree a willow -- the tree that weeps. Perhaps it stands as the symbol of misery, and of the miserable present. Or it could be the remembrance of lost feeling. The tree for Vladimir is a landmark to remember, a proof of existence. By Act II the seemingly sterile tree has sprouted four or five leaves. Its bearing of leaves could be a symbolic sign of hope which enables Estragon and Vladimir to go on waiting. On the other hand, this "hope" may be no more than a metaphor for silence.

The playwright, by introducing silence, deliberately violates the theatrical canon. But the silent character (who is, in part, a symbol of death) becomes the play's dramatic focus. He is the anti-hero against whom all other characters pit their strength.¹

On the most obvious level, the tree is used as the symbol of the hanging tree. Suicide is often considered and even preferred over waiting, but the tramps cannot achieve such a "positive" state.

Estragon: What about hanging ourselves?
 Vladimir: Hmm. It'd give us an erection.
 Estragon: (highly excited) An erection!
 Vladimir: With all that follows. Where it falls mandrakes grow. That's why they shriek when you pull them up. Did you know that?

(p. 12a)

The tramps are not considering suicide just for the thrill; it connotes generation, fertility, life, even if only in a short moment before death. To be hanged on the tree is also to be crucified -- they would have to sacrifice their present condition to a new life by breaking the habit of the old life. The spectator witnesses in the tree, the effort of that stage prop taking part in nature's powerful rhythm of death and resurrection.

As a play moves away from a realistic basis, its dialogue seems to demand a more highly selective visual state-

¹Karen F. Stein "Metaphysical Silence in Absurd Drama" XII Modern Drama (Feb., 1971), p. 428.

ment where the visual operates on different levels involved with human perception. The scene in Godot is everywhere and nowhere; Estragon and the mound are but a visual interruption. The visual selectivity seems to involve a moving away from form into a perception of function. For example, the trees in a play like Desire Under the Elms not only function as indications of environment but become an overshadowing symbol, a metaphor of the life of the people. A designer might choose to keep the actual shape of the tree but "blow it up" out of proportion in order to select one aspect of its form -- the grotesque shadowing quality. The tree in Beckett's Waiting for Godot functions on an even more fantastic level as it becomes a tree only when perceived as one, part of the philosophy of the play. A visual solution to this might be to make the tree simple, barely a tree at all like a cardboard cut-out with glued on leaves reminiscent of a child's or a primitive drawing where simple lines and circles make a symbolic statement that is a tree, but can be so much more than a tree; a tree that promotes innumerable triangulations and as an innocent statement succeeds in approaching the sublime. The more selective a play becomes in its dialogue, the more potential energy or imagination space is left in the setting.

A designer is involved in creating space for potential action controlled by time. Some resources available to the

designer for the purpose of establishing his atmosphere are setting, lighting, and sound effects. In Waiting For Godot I feel that the designer should seek to create the feeling that the four characters are isolated in Eternity. I envision this cosmic piece being enacted if not on a huge stage, at least in an aura of grand space, where, in a little pool of light, Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky, perform their antics around the tree. The vast emptiness or void about them would serve to emphasize their dependence on one another and their isolation within the enormity of the universe. The grandeur and simplicity of Waiting For Godot is suggested in the stage direction for Act I:

A country road. A tree.
Evening.

In approaching the décor for Godot there are suggestions in the script:

Estragon:	Charming spot. (He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditorium.) Inspiring prospects. (He turns to Vladimir.) Let's go.
Vladimir:	We can't.
Estragon:	Why not?
Vladimir:	We're waiting for Godot.
Estragon:	(despairingly) Ah! (Pause) You're sure it was here?
Vladimir:	What?
Estragon:	That we were to wait.
Vladimir:	He said by the tree (They look at the tree.) Do you see any others.
Estragon:	What is it?
Vladimir:	I don't know. A willow.
Estragon:	Where are the leaves?
Vladimir:	It must be dead.
Estragon:	No more weeping.

Vladimir: Or perhaps it's not the season.
 Estragon: Look to me more like a bush.
 Vladimir: A shrub.
 Estragon: A bush.
 Vladimir: A-. What are you insinuating? That
 we've come to the wrong place?
 (p. 10b)

And:

Vladimir: (looking around) You recognize the
 place?
 Estragon: I didn't say that.
 Vladimir: Well?
 Estragon: That makes no difference.
 Vladimir: All the same...that tree..(turning
 towards auditorium) that bog...
 (p. 10b)

In Act II:

Vladimir: Where else do you think? Do you not
 recognize the place?
 Estragon: (suddenly furious) Recognize? What
 is there to recognize? All my lousy
 life I've crawled about in the mud!
 And you talk to me about scenery!
 (Looking wildly about him.) Look at
 this muckheap! I've never stirred
 from it!
 (p. 39b)

When Pozzo is blind he asks Vladimir to describe the land-
 scape, thinking it might be the Board:

Pozzo: What is it like?
 Vladimir: (looking round.) There's nothing.
 There's a tree.
 (p. 55b)

The effect desired from the décor on stage is therefore the
 effect of negative dreariness.

This is of course only one way a designer might ap-
 proach his work. Nevertheless he should not create a frag-

mented set because the dialogue is fragmented, but rather create a space where fragmented elements can exist. The visual choices that he makes in his abstraction from the total world must always be richer in content or message. They must promote greater triangulations, increasing their necessity to the play. Brecht followed this principle in his play structure where he strips down dialogue and eliminates transitions and irrelevancies to create fragments that result in a whole, through emotional alienation and the supposed intellectual triangulations of the spectator. The objective judgment which Brecht called for is not to be induced by spatial distance alone; temporal distance is equally essential; time is needed in which to retreat from and consider the events, so that as an unimpassioned participant, he might appreciate the passions which possessed the actors, and perceive the motives or ideas that stirred those passions. By being detached the spectator can survey and sum up the phenomena.

When I speak of the tremendous potential of words I am stating that words can be taken at face value or as a stimulus for creation. This again depends on the nature of the play on the fantasy-reality scale. Where words in O'Casey's The Plough and the Stars may be taken for what they are, words in Waiting For Godot are only representations of potential creation. A designer is not involved in a

conscious creation of symbols. He must rely on his perceptions as an artist to create the environment for the playwright's symbols. He is thus, not involved in metaphor -- an all encompassing word or statement of the play's visual solution which relates it to something else -- usually irrelevant to the production. The metaphor always exists where the designer is incapable of solving or perceiving the dynamics of the word and its possibilities of triangulation. In an awkward attempt at control, he forces an imagination limit on the visual which in turn limits the entire production, e.g. Waiting For Godot as an oyster shell. When a designer draws his stimulus from the world, he does not draw only on the mean level of society; he must be aware of the energy forces that make up the world and allow for multiple interpretations of his space, especially in plays like Waiting For Godot.

The playwright's approach to dialogue in the creation of his world seems to operate either within a tight or loose structure which could be related to objective or non-objective painting: the former being a creative vision interpreted through recognizable imagery and executed by craft (example: Andrew Wyeth-Neil Simon); the latter being the immediate execution of a vision (example: Wassily Kandinsky-Antonin Artaud), with many shades in between. Where Neil Simon creates his plays from an inspiration for

a topic, executed through his knowledge of the theatre and craftsmanship as a playwright, Artaud wants his total chaotic vision to exist onstage and talks of the creation of a new dialogue to better express his vision where words seem inadequate.

Adolphe Appia, in his book Music and Theatrical Production² refers to his work with Richard Wagner and talks of using music over dialogue as a more direct means of communication between the playwright and the other interpretive theatre artists. As a stage designer and theoretician Appia began to apply in practice the view that drama should be conveyed through a rhythmic organization of space; and that this space should be created through the use of moving light. Gordon Craig³ held similar views. He intended that the play of light should break up the various angles and that abstract kinetic techniques -- such as moving light controlled through the manipulation of screens -- should be utilized in the creation of the décor. Movement plays an important part in Craig's theories.

²Also known under the following titles: Die Musik und die Inszenierung; La Musique et la Mise en Scene; Music and Stage Setting. All were published in 1899.

³Gordon Craig's theories are best studied in his publications: The Art of the Theatre (1905), On the Art of the Theatre (1911), Towards a New Theatre (1913), The Marionette (1918), The Theatre Advancing (1921), Books and Theatres (1925).

In Godot lighting can assist in the mood at the end of each act. Within each act there are definite sections:

- (1) The two tramps endeavoring to pass the time.
- (2) The Pozzo and Lucky diversion.
- (3) The arrival and departure of the Boy.
- (4) The falling of night and the decision to wait on until the next day.

A change of lighting would assist the director and actors to impose the correct mood for the audience. For example, by the end the tramps should be dimly yet impressively lit.

It is significant to note that the better the quality of a play as a theatrical piece, the less need there is for scenery and costumes of any specific nature. This is seen quite readily in the theatres of both Shakespeare and the Greeks where the designer is not involved in decoration but deals in creating imagination space for the rich action of the dialogue. No area or object is limited in possibility for both the actor and the audience. In his analysis, a designer must realize the areas of the play where a visual reinforcement is needed or where he should "pull back" and let the dialogue take over. The designer uses the effect of colour to create a kind of plastic harmony and to induce a visual atmosphere. Colour gives our vision intensity, vitality, and depth, and the eye synthesizes these through forms and shapes. His design takes on a living, organic quality that moves and changes through the time of the actual production.

A designer must therefore be aware of the playwright's words both on an intuitive and intellectual level, related to his abstraction from the world of his time, in the context of today. He must be aware of the many-sided nature and significance of words and how they can be stated or extended in a visual solution that is an organic outgrowth of the playwright's intent. His ability to do this in an imaginative and creative manner would surely enrich the theatrical production.

CHAPTER XII

DIRECTOR AS PLAY-WRIGHT

Time is measured out in the theatre in accordance with our feelings about it outside the theatre. Today, various kinds of disenchantment, aimlessness, a desire for repose, ...have made us distrustful of Time as we normally understand it.

... The throwing over of Time is concurrent with the throwing over of formal conventions. But in the theatre we must still come to terms with the discard of all the traditional equipment of dramaturgy: plot, character, consecutive thought, structure, pacing, pointing, symmetrical rhythms, Time -- which are testaments to the form-giving power of mind, not incontestable Signs of debility. Brecht certainly knew this; Beckett knows it.¹

The director is an interpretive artist; he must convey to the audience every quality of a play in its fullest dramatic value, and see too that his actors not only act their characters but convey his concept of the playwright's intent. Director and actor must sense emotionally and intellectually the playwright's emotional and intellectual expres-

¹Herbert Blau, The Impossible Theatre, pp. 199-200.

sion. Frequently they must motivate their imagination beyond his -- sensing the playwright's imagination and adding to it.

It is, however, important for actor and director to be not only creative but also interpretative for they bring to life for an audience the specific product of the playwright. The task is to study the qualities in the play; hence in Godot dominant themes, symbols, characterization, relationships, et al. must be reviewed.

Critics cannot be "tossed off" all that lightly just because they look for deeper intellectual meanings in symbols. Carl Jung says that the psyche speaks to the psyche in its own language, and that language is none other than the symbol itself.² The symbol has been created by the energy engendered by the tension of opposites flowing together -- complex mental achievement and primitive motions of the psyche.³ "The quest itself is thus understood as the manifestation of a primordial or archetypal urge or desire."⁴ I see this urge or drive as the unconscious striving for unity of being -- unity of thought and action -- in the symbols who are Estragon, Vladimir, Pozzo and Lucky. We

²C. G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol ed. Violet S. de Laszlo (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), p. xxiv.

³Ibid., p. xxii.

⁴Ibid., p. xxx.

must apprehend Waiting For Godot in its entirety, and give in to the interaction of symbols as we would to experiencing all the themes of a symphony simultaneously, to know it and enjoy it most fully. Meaning is gained through an unsophisticated, simple giving of oneself to the play.

In Waiting For Godot Estragon sums up the plot quite simply: "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" (p. 27b) On a country road, by a tree, two old tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, or Didi and Gogo, as they call themselves, are waiting. The time is evening. The tramps have been separated all day and now, reunited, they await the mysterious Godot who, if he comes as they think he has promised to come, will put everything right in their lives.

Who is Godot? Critics have "had a field day" attempting to define who or what Godot is. Godot could obviously be a weakened form of the word God, as in the shortening of Pierre-Pierrot or Charles-Charlot, or it could be an illusion to a character in a play by Balzac called Godeau, who is much talked about, but never seen. Some claim that Godot is the earthly ideal of a better social order, for don't the tramps long for food, shelter, and the possibility of not being beaten? Others say Godot is death; Didi and Gogo will hang themselves tomorrow if death does not claim them first. Still others say that

Godot is the inaccessible that Beckett is searching for throughout all his work, always with the hope that "This time, perhaps, at last, it will be I."⁵ Godot can be seen as the unknowable, the void and the darkness that we cannot comprehend. He is the mystery at the heart of life.

These ideas may be interesting, but it is impossible to validate them especially in view of Beckett's own statement. (If you recall, he told Alan Schneider who asked him who or what Godot is, "If I knew, I would have said so in the play.") Certainly, the various clues are contradictory, yet illuminating enough.

The script itself tells us various characteristics about who or what Godot is. He is a bourgeois bureaucrat. Vladimir and Estragon decide to wait and see what Godot says:

Estragon: And what did he reply?
 Vladimir: That he'd see.
 Estragon: That he couldn't promise anything.
 Vladimir: That he's have to think it over.
 Estragon: In the quiet of his home.
 Vladimir: Consult his family.
 Estragon: His friends.
 Vladimir: His agents.
 Estragon: His correspondents.
 Vladimir: His books.
 Estragon: His bank account.
 Vladimir: Before taking a decision. (p. 13b)

⁵Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Samuel Beckett, or 'Presence' in the Theatre" in Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays Edited by Martin Esslin (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965), p. 110.

Godot is a judge:

Vladimir: Let's wait till we know exactly how
we stand.

(p. 12b)

We are told that Godot has a white beard and does nothing:

Vladimir: What does he do, Mr. Godot?...

Boy: He does nothing, Sir.

(p. 59a)

and

Vladimir (softly): Has he a beard, Mr. Godot?

Boy: Yes Sir.

Vladimir: Yes Sir.

Vladimir: Fair or... (he hesitates) ...or black?

Boy: I think it's white, Sir.

(p. 59a)

Godot has the tramps future in his hands:

Pozzo: ...-what happens in that case to your
appointment with this...Godet...Godot
...Godin...anyhow you see who I mean,
who has your future in his hands...
(pause) ...at least your immediate
future?

(p. 13b)

We know too that Godot speaks, presumably through a boy, but
not in certain terms: "He didn't say for sure he'd come."

(p. 10a) As well, Godot is harsh and unpredictable in
bestowing kindness and punishment. The boy messenger who
minds the goats is treated well, his brother who tends the
sheep is beaten. The beating is arbitrarily done it would
seem. No reason is given for Godot's irrational preference
of one brother over the other. Nonetheless, the situation
parallels the story of Cain and Abel. (c.f. p. 33b)

As far as the figure of Godot is concerned Vladimir and Estragon are uncertain about his name, his physical features, the nature of their supplication to him, and the time and place of their appointment with him; and the boy, although possessing the positive illusions and imagination that are typical of youth, can, when pressed to the point, be no more definite about Godot than Vladimir and Estragon. Perhaps this is why the inmates of San Quentin penitentiary, stripped of any desire to be "cultured" or "intellectual," immediately and intuitively understood the play when they saw it performed there in 1957. To each of them Godot was something quite different and distinct, e.g. Godot was society, Godot was the "outside."⁶

We do know this: Godot is the "person" for whom the two tramps are sitting at the side of the road, and that he does not come. We hear that at one time Vladimir and Estragon have seen Godot and albeit nothing is remembered of him, we see Vladimir and Estragon remain passively waiting for him, living in the illusion that Godot will eventually come to them:

Vladimir: I thought it was he.
 Estragon: Who?
 Vladimir: Godot.

⁶ Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. xvi.

Estragon: Pah! The wind in the reeds.
(p. 13b)

And

Vladimir: How do you mean tied?
Estragon: Down.
Vladimir: But to whom? By whom?
Estragon: To your man.
Vladimir: To Godot? Tied to Godot. What an idea! No question of it. (Pause.)
For the moment.
Estragon: His name is Godot?
Vladimir: I think so.
(p. 14b)

And

Vladimir: Oh he's a...he's a kind of acquaintance.
Estragon: Nothing of the kind, we hardly know him.
Vladimir: True...we don't know him very well...
but all the same...
Estragon: Personally, I wouldn't even know him
if I saw him.
(p. 16a)

At the end of Act I, they are informed that Godot will not come today, but he will surely come tomorrow. The same message is repeated at the end of Act II, with the same result. Vladimir and Estragon constantly talk about "going off" (c.f. p. 32a) but it is merely the mechanical ejaculation of hope. Even their exercises are sterile, like masturbation without fantasy:

Vladimir: We could do our exercise.
Estragon: Our movements.
Vladimir: Our elevations.
Estragon: Our relaxations.
Vladimir: Our elongations.
Estragon: Our relaxations.
Vladimir: To warm us up.
Estragon: To calm us down.
Vladimir: Off we go.
(p. 49a)

In the midst of their confusion about time and place all that the chief characters of the play know is that they have an appointment, and the only appointment which is certain, but about which we know nothing concerning the time or the place, is death, the release from time. To negate the existence of time in its futuristic aspects is to immobilize oneself in time, something that death does for us. In death we become identified with our past, we assume a character -- but not until then. Many times throughout the play Godot is linked with night:

We are no longer alone, waiting
for the night, waiting for Godot,
waiting for...waiting.

(p. 50a)

Vladimir hopes that with time their condition will change. But in fact it will only make their weariness heavier. The linking of Godot with night and death is important. With night and death the desire or demand for Godot no longer is necessary. Night and death are certainties, providing release from the indignities and agonies of waking consciousness, and the characters, sustained by conscious habit, wait for this release.

What makes their stay so agonizing is the uncertainty that overshadows everything. From the very beginning Vladimir is haunted by some memory of the Bible: "Hope deferred maketh

the something sick, who said that?"⁷ (p. 8a)

Yet the tramps live in hope. When asked about the theme of Waiting For Godot, Beckett sometimes refers to a passage from the writings of St. Augustine: "Do not despair: one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume: one of the thieves was damned."⁸ The theme of the two thieves on the cross, of the uncertainty of the hope of salvation and fortuitousness of the bestowal of grace does pervade the play. The two tramps discuss the perplexing aspects of it. Only one of the four gospel writers speaks of a thief being saved, and it is a curious fact that everyone believes that witness. Estragon comments: "People are bloody ignorant apes." (p. 9a) The fortuitous bestowal of grace divides mankind, like the two thieves, into those who will be saved and those who will be damned.⁹ As in the situation of Cain and Abel, where the grace of the Lord fell on one and not the other, with no rational explanation, Godot's coming might mean damnation, as well as joy. Estragon in Act II, when he believes Godot is coming, thinks immediately, "I'm accursed." (p. 47a) For Estragon, Godot's

⁷It is actually "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick but a desire fulfilled is the tree of life." (Proverbs, 13:12).

⁸Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 32.

⁹Ibid., p. 21.

coming means the Apocalypse -- when the just will be lifted up and the wicked damned. And Estragon is wicked.

For Vladimir and Estragon redemption within time is impossible because they are oblivious to the sequence of time. And the chances of redemption within the Christian scheme of salvation are also slim since, as Vladimir establishes, only one of the four Evangelists mentioned that one of the two thieves was saved. The characters are thrown on their own resources and reality is made bearable to them only through their comic diversions. Everything becomes a diversion -- eating, their play with language, with human emotions, with the other characters. And it is this moment of judgment, when their games will be useless and time will actually have stopped, that they dread. The Judgment Day is constantly imminent -- but without God.

The possibility of judgment is raised again and again: with the quotation from Augustine (c.f. p. 9a), the reference to Cain and Abel (c.f. p. 53b), the fact that one boy minds sheep and the other goats (c.f. p. 33b). All of this adds up to a picture of the last Judgment Day, when time shall be no more, and the kingdom of heaven established. But the judgment will only come with Godot, and Godot won't come.

There are endless religious references¹⁰ in the play.

¹⁰c.f. Appendix E for religious parallels and references.

Estragon recalls the maps of the Holy Land. One wonders if once there had been a true love in his life; but it is the Dead Sea he wanted to visit on his honeymoon. (p. 8b) In their waiting and their forgetfulness they are like very old men, waiting for death, who nevertheless cling pointlessly to life, except that old men are spared the tortured consciousness of the tramps. They fear what they desire; they fear the end of their misery. They fear salvation because it means the most horrible fundamental change. (c.f. p. 47b)

The question as to whether Godot is a religious or Christian play has often been raised. Christian interpretations abound. Didi and Gogo's waiting is seen as signifying their steadfast hope and faith. Didi's kindness to Gogo and their interdependence can be seen as symbols of Christian charity. Lucky is sometimes seen as the suffering Servant of the Old Testament and Kay Baxter in Contemporary Theatre and the Christian Faith sees the whole play as Beckett's experience of the story of the Passion.

These religious interpretations, however, overlook the constant stress on the uncertainty of the appointment, on Godot's unreliability and irrationality and the repeated demonstration of the futility of hope being pinned upon him.¹¹

¹¹ Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, p. 22.

Suicide is constantly considered preferable to waiting, yet it is unattainable due to the pair's own incompetence and their lack of practical tools to achieve it. They continue to wait: "We have kept our appointment and that's an end to that. We are not saints, but we have kept our appointment. How many people can boast as much?" asks Vladimir. "Billions," replies Estragon. (p. 51b) Billions of people do spend their time waiting, keeping an appointment with an unknown quantity which never comes, dreaming like Estragon of a happiness which they never attain. Waiting becomes a habit which prevents them from ever realizing the full, perhaps painful meaning of what it is to be. As long as Gogo and Didi have the saving illusion that Godot will come, they never face the human condition with any awareness. At one point Vladimir seems about to come to a recognition of the illusion of their life:

Was I sleeping, while the others
suffered? Am I sleeping now? To-
morrow, when I wake, or think I
do, what shall I say of to-day?
That with Estragon my friend, at
this place, until the fall of night,
I waited for Godot? That Pozzo
passed, with his carrier, and that
he spoke to us? Probably. But in
all that what truth will there be? ...
The air is full of our cries. ...
But habit is a great deadner. (He
looks again at Estragon.) At me
too someone is saying, he is sleep-
ing, he knows nothing, let him
sleep on. (Pause.) I can't go on!
(Pause.) What have I said?

(pp. 58a & b)

The ultimate pain of this existence is not that it may be illusion, but that it is real. Man who possesses himself fully is really asleep.

The director who decides to stage Beckett's play must decide on his method of approaching the play. Perhaps, after reading a variety of interpretations, he will settle on making no firm resolution as to using only one "academic" view, but will rather, together with his dramaturge, discover a more intuitive production concept. Still, the question of who or what Godot is, is as we have seen, a dominant question that pervades the play and cannot be avoided. However, even at the intuitive level all that the actors must know is that Godot is somebody that Vladimir and Estragon need; the actor can discover for himself who he feels Godot is at any given moment in the play.

Herbert Blau, as a director of Waiting For Godot discusses his views and concepts of the play for him:

In discussing a style, the effort was to extend the natural into the unnatural, to create the reality of illusion and the illusion of reality, to make the theatrical real and the real theatrical, to test the very limits of style and stage. Thus, the actors, who might be going through the routine motions of anxiety, as natural as possible, would move, almost without transition, into the shoulder-to-shoulder, face-front attitude of burlesque comedians. Or Gogo, wandering about the stage in irritation, would suddenly strike the proscenium and cry: "I'm hungry!"

The motive was personal, the extension theatrical, the biological urge became the aesthetic question. The proscenium had, in our production, no "real" place in the "environment" presumably established by the scenery, but it was an immovable fact in the topography of the stage. It was part of the theatrical environment as a painter's studio is an environment for his painting. Our task in performance was to make such gestures believable moments of action, to reassert the oldest criterion of dramatic truth, to make the improbable probable. Gogo's strike was a criticism, encapsulating years of protest, as if he'd be less hungry if the proscenium didn't exist. The character's problem, the actor's problem, the theatre's problem, the philosophical problem were rolled into his fist.¹²

Beckett's art is deep but narrow and this is an essential aspect of it. The world outside his mind does not exist and in a way, that is precisely his appeal to the contemporary personality, which is almost neurotically concerned only with himself. Nevertheless, dramatically Beckett's focus is infinite. His work is a departure, a bizarre and unique experience at once both funny and frightening.

¹²Herbert Blau, The Impossible Theatre, p. 233.

CHAPTER XIII

ACTOR AS PLAY-WRIGHT

Unless directors and actors explore the detailed ways in which Beckett, in the context of a text, alters and transposes the relationships between his characters, audiences will not apprehend the nature of these new forms, and may shrug them off as "failures in communication."¹

A great deal of work and experimentation is being done in developing the actor today. A vital and effective theatre group is more than a random assembly of actors, directors, designers, composers and a producer. To succeed, it must be the closest of families, bound by a common purpose and a consistent vision. This is the basic strength of Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre; it is the strength that Peter Brook has; it is the strength of Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Lab. Theatre.

Jerzy Grotowski at his Polish Laboratory Theatre in Wroclaw experiments with the human body. He believes that when an actor is in full control of his instrument something magical occurs. His theatre is in every sense a laboratory.

¹Albert Bermel, "Beckett Without Metaphysics" in Performance (April, 1972), p. 121.

Physical development of the actor is demanded; for example, in terms of Godot, the actor portraying Lucky must be physically fit for he is pulled about by a rope, thrown heavily on the stage and kicked. Or with Pozzo, the timing of his manoeuvres with pipe, matches, vaporizer, basket, whip, rope and watch are highly intricate. All of this makes enormous demands on the physical precision and stamina of the actor and requires endless practice if it is to be carried out in a convincing manner. Peter Bull, who portrayed Pozzo in the Peter Hall production of Waiting For Godot tells about his experience.

The rehearsals were the most gruelling that I've ever experienced in all my puff. The lines were baffling enough, but the props that I was required to carry about my person made life intolerable. Aspiring actors are hereby warned against parts that entail them being tied to another artiste, as they will find it restricts their movements. As well as this handicap I had to carry an overcoat, a giant watch, a pipe, lorgnettes, and heaven knows what else. The rope had to be adjusted continuously, so that I could pull it taut round my slave's neck, if possible not throttling Mr. Bateson (Lucky was the name of the character).

...The first night was, I think, my most alarming experience on the stage (so far). ...I lost my head quite early on by inserting the rope, by which Mr. Bateson was attached to me, inside my coat sleeve.

...I spent the next quarter of an hour in a semi-hysterical condition, knowing that if I hadn't actually strangled Mr. Bateson by the time he got to make his big speech, it was highly probable

that he would have to make it in pitch darkness owing to non-arrival at the position on which his spotlight was trained.²

For Grotowski, a play is like a magnifying glass that focuses the full heat of the sun on the head of a pin. And although Grotowski's theatre is actor-centered, it is ultimately concerned with the actor-spectator relationship. The relationship between actor and audience is subtly altered from performer and spectator to a merging of personality in which each somehow acquires the identity of the other and suffers the same strife of soul.

One reason for this is that both playgoer and actor are forced to divest themselves of casual everyday preoccupations and behavior patterns. Grotowski essentially wants to demonstrate what is behind the mask of common vision -- the dialectics of human behavior. At a moment of psychic shock, a moment of terror, of mortal danger or tremendous joy, a man does not behave 'naturally.' By attacking the whole concept of natural behavior, Grotowski divorces himself from the cult of psychological realism, as exemplified in the Actors' Studio. The Actors' Studio's idea is that the self is an onion. If one peels off enough layers, one will reach the emotional verity. But Grotowski's goal is

²Peter Bull, "Peter Bull as Pozzo" in Casebook on Waiting For Godot Edited by Ruby Cohn (N. Y.: Grove Press, Inc., 1967), pp. 39-42.

spiritual truth and he trains his actors to exemplify this "truth" through strenuous physical exercises and contemplative disciplines. For an actor in Beckett's play it is necessary that he crawl into himself like Kafka's Gregor Samsa in The Metamorphosis, using whatever method he pleases.

Vladimir and Estragon can be seen as two individuals who embody various fundamental aspects of mankind, or they can be viewed subjectively as two parts of the same person. Didi and Gogo are bound to one another by a friendship that only occasionally becomes annoying to both of them. Pozzo and Lucky, however, seem to have the lonelier relationship for although they depend on each other, they dislike each other.

Vladimir and Estragon represent the relationship between the body and the mind; the material and spiritual sides of man, with the intellect subordinate to the appetites of the body. Vladimir represents the spiritual more active, more intellectual, more masculine side. He has romantic impulses, for example, when he tries to discover a metaphysical significance to human utterances:

I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me saying, Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't tried everything. And I resume the struggle.

(p. 7a)

Where Vladimir is thin, prosaic and suffers from bad breath,

Estragon is plump, has an unstable temperament and suffers greatly from his feet which smell bad. He is also more child-like, more sensuous than Vladimir, and egotistical and represents the more feminine aspects of an individual or the female partner (i.e. if the Vladimir-Estragon relationship is viewed as a homosexual one). But the tramps need each other. They are "a metaphor of the human condition and represent what is unchanging and what transcends the particular and the socio-historical aspect of human life."³

When Pozzo and Lucky appear, Vladimir and Estragon claim not to recognize them, and mistake Pozzo for Godot. Pozzo, as does Didi later on, seems to be making a violent, almost pleading assertion of his identity:

I am Pozzo! (Silence.) Pozzo! (Silence.)
Does that name mean nothing to you?
(Silence.) I say does that name mean
nothing to you?

(p. 15b)

Who are Pozzo and Lucky? They have no appointment, no objective, and are wholly wrapped up in their sado-masochistic master-slave relationship. The Pozzo-Lucky relationship is in fact, a parallel to Hegel's master-slave relationship.⁴ Pozzo is the master or the exploiter and the user of ideas;

³J. Chiari, Landmarks of Contemporary Drama (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), p. 94.

⁴c.f. Appendix F for a discussion of Hegel's master-slave relationship.

Lucky is the servile slave, the exploited one, and yet, paradoxically the creator of ideas. He is materially and spiritually Pozzo's slave and has no individual existence of his own. They are, however, undeniably active, unlike Didi and Gogo, who are condemned to wait as if frozen in time, with only the games they invent to make that time bearable. Pozzo drives Lucky forward -- he must move on. Despite the fact that Lucky is a slave who must spend his life carrying the burdens of others, he is totally free from all burdens of initiative; unlike the tramps, he does not have to wait, he is driven forward, and occasionally even has a bone thrown to him. Pozzo, the master, orders his every move. Lucky is ordered to dance; he performs the dance of the net, the entanglement of man in his circumstances.⁵ When he is ordered to think, out pours the famous tirade strewn with fragments of an ancient, forgotten culture and long-buried learning, which is perhaps presented as the sum total of human knowledge, encompassing art, science, religion, philosophy, politics, commerce, all reduced to an almost incoherent stream of ranting. But beneath the apparent gibberish there is a compelling logic: despite the advances that have been made in culture and science man has

⁵David I. Grossvogel, Four Playwrights and a Postscript: Brecht, Ionesco, Beckett, Genet (N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 91.

shrunk and dwindled, wasted and pined, and this is all the more serious because the air and the earth have remained constant throughout. Beneath the breaks and repetitions of Lucky's monologue we have a statement of the tragic condition of modern man. Remember that in this disconnected commentary Lucky is thinking and throughout the thinking act Beckett seems to be pointing out that to think is to be aware of the inherent tragedy of all life. Significantly, the others do not allow him to finish. They throw themselves upon him, seize his hat, which is the mark of his dignity, and he stops. Man cannot or does not wish to communicate. What wisdom Lucky has is not wanted by his companions.

The same point is made in Act II:

Vladimir: When you seek you hear.
Estragon: You do?
Vladimir: That prevents you from thinking.
Estragon: You think all the same.
Vladimir: No no, impossible.
Estragon: That's the idea. Let's contradict each other.
Vladimir: Impossible.
Estragon: You think so?
Vladimir: We're in no danger of ever thinking any more.
Estragon: Then what are we complaining about?
Vladimir: Thinking is not the worst.
Estragon: Perhaps not. But at least there's that.
Vladimir: That what?
Estragon: That's the idea. Let's ask each other questions.
Vladimir: What do you mean, at least there's that?
Estragon: That much less misery.
Vladimir: True.
Estragon: Well? If we gave thanks for our mercies?

Vladimir: What is terrible is to have thought.
(pp. 41a & b)

The point that emerges from this little dialogue is that action, no matter how meaningless and futile it appears, prevents one from thinking on the tragic realities of life, and if one avoids thought there is that much less misery in living. But as Vladimir points out, it is terrible to have thought because once one is aware of the tragedy of life one can never escape the awareness.

In the second act Pozzo and Lucky reappear cruelly deformed by the action of time, although it is apparently only the next day. Lucky has now been struck dumb, the ultimate degeneracy of intellectualism. Pozzo has lost his sight. In Act I he represented the master of the earth, the omnipotent. He is time incarnate, inhuman, time separated from human experience. If he loses his watch he will degenerate completely. Where Vladimir is chained to watch time, Pozzo is chained to his watch. He is blind now but unlike the blind Tiresias who could see into the future, Pozzo violently cries out:

Don't question me! The blind have
no notion of time. The things of
time are hidden from them too.
(p. 55b)

His fall marks the illusion inherent in even the greatest

apparent power.⁶ Whatever Pozzo and Lucky had in the first act has disintegrated, just like Didi's carrot which, in the second act, has become a radish.

Once again, when Pozzo and Lucky reappear, Vladimir and Estragon do not recognize them. They doubt that they are the same people they met on the previous day, nor does Pozzo remember them. Again, Pozzo is mistaken for Godot. Time has passed, they have waited and experienced its action, yet nothing really happens, and nothing has any meaning. Pozzo sums up the brevity of life beautifully in his last great outburst, which reveals the fact that, as befits his outer blindness, his inner vision has ironically become keen.

Have you not done tormenting me
with your accursed time! It's
abominable! When! When! One day,
is that not enough for you, one
day he went dumb, one day I went
blind, one day we'll go deaf, one
day we were born, one day we shall
die, the same day, the same second,
is that not enough for you? (Calmer.)
They give birth astride of a grave,
the light gleams an instant, then
it's night once more.

(p. 57b)

And the tramps' timeless condition is the "instant" that the

⁶George E. Wellworth, The Theatre of Protest and Paradox: Development in the Avant-Garde Drama (N. Y.: New York University Press, 1964), p. 49.

light gleams.

Vladimir shortly afterwards agrees with Pozzo:

Astride of a grave and a difficult
birth. Down in the hole, linger-
ingly, the grave-digger puts on
the forceps.

(p. 58a)

The silence of the womb is not pregnant with answers -- it
is the silence of nothingness.

The tramp is the modern metaphor for universal man.

He is

a symbol of humanity considered as
residue, stripped of its function
and plans for transformations, and
left face to face with itself. The
tramp has become the image of our
condition laid bare, with every-
thing else a mere secondary quality
or anecdote. He is an image of
humanity reduced to zero, about to
start again from nothing.⁷

The following story illustrates this fact clearly:

There was once a young man who wished
very much to become a clown. Training
as an apprentice for a travelling circus,
he devised a short act using a bouquet
of flowers, which in time became routine
and successful. "What would happen if
you lost your flowers?" a fellow clown
one day asked. "I refuse to believe that
day will ever come," was the reply. Soon
thereafter as our young man was running
on stage to perform his act, this same
clown who asked him the question snatched

⁷Jacques Guicharnaud "Existence on Stage" in On Contemporary Literature, p. 269.

the flowers from our running man's hands. Our young man found himself in the center of the circus tent before he could fully realize what was happening. He froze with fear, staring at the crowd staring back at him. The awe full silence was broken by a giggle which graduated to hearty laughter. Returning backstage, this young man was confronted by the other clowns who greeted him with one word, "Welcome!"⁸

The action sequence of this story relates an important concept concerning modern man -- the finding of self. Within this there is an implication that man, at some point in life, hopefully before death, is confronted with the "truth," an awareness of his paradoxical and simultaneous nothingness and everythingness. The acceptance of this moment implies that objectively and scientifically, the self has been shown or has shown itself various alternatives from which to choose its future way of life. For an individual to find himself, he must, in some predetermined or accidental fashion be stripped of his bouquet of flowers. He must experience spiritual life. In this delirious sense of nothingness comes something. Our young clown achieved his applause. Beckett's ultimate position is that man is the clown of the universe. But he is the clown for whom Beckett weeps, and that is his saving compassion. Tragedy alone forces us, for a moment, to live without our flowers.

Like the stereotyped clown, Didi and Gogo are quite

⁸Charles I. Gliscksberg, The Self in Modern Literature (Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1963), p. 7.

often naive and selfish. They are repetitious in their earnestness and their actions are marked by stretches of boredom and stylized action. The stage motion is repeated over and over again, and even simple events, like the hat episodes, are so redundant that they become metaphysically fearsome.

Waiting For Godot has a great awareness of theatrical gesture -- taking off a pair of boots, changing a hat. There is a definite relationship between taking off hats and boots and the play's theme. The first thing we see is Estragon taking his boots off and both of them become wildly interested to find out if there is anything in the boot that hurts, and there is nothing. Vladimir is constantly taking his hat off, looking in it, finding nothing.

The hat episode is an example of a circular motion; it is also a typical "clown" routine:

Vladimir spies Lucky's hat which had been left there from the day before and that begins the circular motion: Estragon takes Vladimir's hat. Vladimir adjusts Lucky's hat on his head. Estragon puts on Vladimir's hat in place of his own which he hands to Vladimir. Vladimir takes Estragon's hat. Estragon adjusts Vladimir's hat on his head. Vladimir puts on Estragon's hat in place of Lucky's which he hands to Estragon. Estragon takes Lucky's hat...
(p. 46a)

The major repetition is of course Act II. The circular move-

ment gives security, reduces nervousness, and produces a calmness. The clumsiness and bumbling action of a clown with his comic and burlesque routines brings a scene "down to earth" and to the very sensibilities of an audience. The use of clowns gestures is theatrical and appeals to an audience. Albert Bermel writes that

Herbert Berghof's Godot on Broadway uncovered a wealth of comedy and pathos in one gesture alone: every-time Didi (Bert Lahr) replied "Ah!" to Gogo's "We're waiting for Godot," he moved his hand to his mouth, and then away, up toward the sky.⁹

Hugh Kenner parallels the tramps gestures to those of Emmett Kelly's "Solemn determination to sweep a circle of light into a dustpan: a haunted man whose fidelity to an impossible task...illuminates the dynamics of a tragic sense of duty."¹⁰ The clown is the only entertainer who consistently draws laughter through his own self-abasement. The tramps activities in Godot highlight the fact that they are the contretemps of clowns; their interrupted gestures and fragmented speech convey the subtle discontinuous groundwork of time.

The audience is made to witness stark suffering, a

⁹Albert Bermel, "Beckett Without Metaphysics" in Performance (April, 1972), p. 126.

¹⁰Hugh Kenner, "The Beckett Landscape" in Spectrum 2 (Winter, 1958), p. 8.

suffering caused by the endless gnawing of physical ailments and discomforts, of cold and hunger, redeemed only by the atmosphere of human tenderness.

As for uncertainty of meaning, just perform what he tells you to perform, and you will feel -- as if by some equation between doing and feeling -- exactly what you need to feel, in the bones. ...Speak the speech of Lucky trippingly on the tongue, clutching through all the eschatological gibberish at the loose ends of Western philosophy, and you will know -- if you follow the rhythm -- the full, definitive exhaustion of thought. Let the tramps and Pozzo pummel you at the same time, and you will know what it is to be "finished!" ...Try to hang yourself upon the tree -- go ahead, try it -- and you will see, decidedly, the degree to which the tree is useless. Eat Gogo's carrot and try to carry on a conversation, and you will know quite materially that a carrot is a carrot.¹¹

There is audible and visible on the stage, the anguish which grips man when he becomes aware of his aloneness amidst the vast spaces that surround him. The spectator cannot but identify himself with Estragon and Vladimir, bewildered and abandoned in a universe which makes no sense and where one has to wait for a redeemer who presumably won't be coming.

¹¹Herbert Blau, The Impossible Theatre, p. 231.

CHAPTER XIV

AUDIENCE AND AESTHETIC DISTANCE

The only possible approach to Godot for director, actors, and audience alike, is on a strictly emotional basis. The play depends on a rapport which must be set up between audience and actors. It is through aesthetic distance that the spectator moves into the space-time of creative imagination. But just what does an aesthetic sense of space and time entail? Of aesthetic distance P. A. Michelis writes:

As a supersensible distance it both is and is not a dimension. ...it is not a linear dimension, for it does not extend between one point and another. Objectively, it may be said to be at least four-dimensional, since it extends between two spaces -- specifically between the space-time of reality and the space-time of the world of ideas -- interposing an additional space-time between them, that separates them as it promotes their fusion. Subjectively, aesthetic distance is multi-dimensional, for it extends from the center of creative imagination to all the other regions of our inner world. Distance in itself is of course neutral; it is a no man's land, but on its roads centrifugal and centripetal forces are at work. As a separating road, aesthetic distance is the road of oblivion, from which a new world vanishes. As a connecting road,

aesthetic distance is the road of memory along which imagination must travel to reach and realize ideas aesthetically.¹

Michelis, in the same article also says,

...aesthetic distance is an inner distance of spiritual dimension; its external conditions, limitations, and contradictions are ultimately eliminated because the spectator transcends them.²

A similar view is taken by Bernard Berenson:

In visual art the aesthetic moment is that fleeting instant, so brief as to be almost timeless, when the spectator is at one with the work of art he is looking at, or with actuality of any kind the spectator himself sees in terms of art, as form and color. He ceases to be his ordinary self, and the picture or building, stature, landscape, or aesthetic actuality is no longer outside himself. The two become one awareness. When he recovers workaday consciousness it is as if he had been initiated into illuminating, exalting, formative mysteries. In short, the aesthetic moment is a moment of mystic vision.³

Sometimes, however, this does not occur and the aes-

¹P. A. Michelis, "Aesthetic Distance and the Charm of Contemporary Art" in Aesthetics and the Arts by Lee A. Jacobus (New York, St. Louis, San Francisco, Toronto, London, Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 47.

²Ibid., p. 33.

³Bernard Berenson, "The Aesthetic Moment" in Aesthetics and the Arts, by Lee A. Jacobus, p. 8.

thetic distance is broken. It may be due to poor acting, or to an inferior play, or to an uncultured audience, or to all three. As an example of this loss of aesthetic distance, P. A. Michelis cites the story of the fireman, who, watching a theatrical performance from off stage, suddenly cried out, warning the leading lady of her imminent danger. Michelis gives the reasons for this:

The fireman had...lost the aesthetic distance by which he would have realized that the performance he was watching was an imitation of life; but it is equally certain that his physical proximity to the stage was, to a large extent, responsible for the disappearance of the aesthetic distance. From where he stood back stage, he could not see the scene as a whole; he was, therefore, apt to be carried away by the emotions displayed by an individual actor, and to lose sight of the balance and general meaning of the work. That is why the producer, while rehearsing his cast, often comes off stage into the auditorium to watch the acting in perspective and enjoy the scene as a spectator, interposing the appropriate space between himself and the work. Naturally, if the spectator sits too far from the stage, he is cut off from the spectacle, because the intense concentration of sight and hearing impedes his enjoyment of the work. Only the middle distance provides him with a comprehensive view and simultaneously helps him to share the emotions displayed, so that he can appreciate the work with the due aesthetic "disinterested interest."⁴

Detachment from real space and time is not enough for

⁴P. A. Michelis, "Aesthetic Distance and the Charm of Contemporary Art" in Aesthetics and the Arts by Lee A. Jacobus, pp. 33-34.

achieving aesthetic distance. If a spectator becomes so detached, as in the case of the fireman, then the spectator would be in danger of falling into a vacuum. Usually, however, the work of art saves him from this danger; for however ideal it may be, it possesses a semblance of reality. Its forms seem able to participate in the life of space and time in which we too move and live: "These forms are detached from prosaic reality, are idealized and brought back in order to be realized in matter."⁵

Art weaves its own time, as it weaves its own space. A writer, for example, perceiving an incident could not describe that specific scene just then for he is engaged in watching its action. But when he sits down to write about it, a certain amount of time will have elapsed. No matter how much time may have passed, the writer will have to depend on his memory to reproduce the event: "Memory, as the link between spirit and matter, is . . . the regulator of the aesthetic distance."⁶ This is an essential link for audience members.

Stage acting is a kind of transliteration of the marginal language of proto-reflective life. Part of what excites the theatre-goer is that he perceives in the perfor-

⁵P. A. Michelis, "Aesthetic Distance and the Charm of Contemporary Art" in Aesthetics and the Arts, by Lee A. Jacobus, p. 43.

⁶Ibid., p. 44.

mance the original nuances of his mundane existence. However, ". . . in the imaginative collusion between artists and viewer no distinction between the real and imaginary is made."⁷

Suffice it to say that man himself is both an agent performing acts in the social world and an actor performing in a theatrical play. And every actor on the stage is also an actor in ordinary life; every actor in ordinary life is capable of grasping the sheer quality of taking a role in a play. Besides, mundane existence includes the taking of multiple social roles by all of us. Life's action is merely a lengthened rehearsal in the on-going imagination of limits and possibilities.

In Waiting For Godot the tragi-comic life we see takes place just on the space in front of the audience. We see a lonely tree which by the second act is adorned with a few leaves, a country road seemingly leading nowhere, a pair of dilapidated boots, heels together and toes apart pointing towards the distance, a derby hat that evokes the tragi-comic figure of a Charlie Chaplin. We hear a cry, and we feel that five yards beyond the proscenium the characters disintegrate. Although there is space beyond, there perhaps is no life beyond the stage. The audience

⁷William H. Bossart "Form and Meaning in the Visual Arts" in Aesthetics and the Arts, p. 18.

merges with the characters whom they are watching and become at one with them. As Gogo and Didi are victimized by the routines, the rhythms of their lives, the spectators are tortured along with them. Like Gogo and Didi they are in their appointed place, waiting for something to happen.⁸ The audience has arrived, hopefully on time, for their appointment -- to see and hear a play. What do they witness? Two tramps who are between the brackets of youth and old age, doing what they can to relieve their ennui through fantasy and action.

The characters of the play are frenzied players -- interdependent in their activities as performer and audience, frustrated by their inability to accept the condition of isolation from any "meaningful purpose." As the four characters are mutually dependent on each other as performers and audience, so an ideal production would see cast and audience mutually dependent on each other for a truly gripping cathartic experience not so much in the Aristotolian or even the Brechtian sense but more in the Grotowski sense of actors and audience merging their "souls" in a total theatre experience.

⁸By that I mean a linear plot line.

Waiting...

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A.1: THE FIRST PART OF THE APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A

HENRI BERGSON

Henri Bergson sees a conflict between the élan vital and static matter. The vital properties of life are not states but tendencies. All is a continual becoming process.

Let us turn first to Bergson's distinction between two ways of viewing reality. The first, "duration," as has been stated in the main body of the thesis, is measurable, quantitative, mathematical time; the second, "Pure Duration" (durée réelle), is immeasurable and qualitative. It is the former which most of us are constantly aware of because of our practical natures, for Bergson views our bodies as "centres of action."¹

The two powers imminent in life which originally intermingled, are instinct and intellect. Their essential object is the utilization of instruments. In the course of evolution, the arthropods received instinct and developed it to its highest level in the insects, while the vertebrates received and developed intellect until it reached its highest level in man.

¹Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 185.

Instinct is the basic faculty. It makes use of the organized instruments supplied by nature. Thus it is more rigid and restricted than intelligence which because it can perceive relations, can use and even create unorganized instruments and can thereby adapt to diverse environments and situations.

Because intellect is only an emanation of life, it is incapable of presenting its true nature. To learn about a thing, the intellect remains on the surface, going all around it and observing it from various points. Its "knowledge" depends on the viewpoint and on symbols, thus intellect necessarily stops at the relative.

The intellect is capable, fundamentally, only of quantitative or mechanical conception. To know anything it must divide and analyze, reducing life into elements and translating it into symbols. Flowing time then becomes hours, minutes, seconds; continuous space is chopped up into feet and inches. These elements are not parts of the living whole which put together would yield reality any more than the letters comprising a poem are parts of it. They cannot be reconstituted for they themselves are lifeless.

The intellect concentrates on what is already made and therein sees things rather than processes. It begins with the immobile, secure in this realm of matter, especially solid, unmoving matter. This is why the mind excels in

geometry, with its permanent tangible forms and abstract symbols. The inert fits the frames of the intellect naturally; the living only artificially, while threatening at every moment to break out. Similarly, in morality and religion, "closed souls" see tradition and custom as permanent, eternal things, not recognizing that what is past is valuable only insofar as it aids growth in the present.

Intellect has been given to us, as instinct to the bee, in order to direct our conduct. By acting consciously in the world, man breaks the circles formed by instinct and thus widens his horizon. Bergson uses the example of learning to swim. A man must cast aside his "natural inclinations" which would keep him on land, and leap out of his environment into a new and alien one. To act, intellect must use all to further its ends, drawing life into itself instead of entering into it. It cannot really create anything but merely "cold hammers the materials, combining together ideas long since cast into words and which society supplies in a solid form."²

Besides its necessity for physical life, the intellect can, in a small way, point to the Absolute. The Absolute is man's province; the essence of things must not necessarily escape for

²Bergson, Two Sources of Morality and Religion, p. 46.

[if] the intellectual form of the living being has been gradually modeled on the reciprocal actions and reactions of certain bodies and their material environment, how should it not reveal to us something of the very essence of which these bodies are made? Action cannot move in the unreal.

...An intellect bent upon the act to be performed and the reaction to follow, feeling its object so as to get its mobile impression at every instant, is an intellect that touches something of the absolute.³

To touch the absolute completely man cannot remain in the intellect but transcends it for a high faculty -- intuition.

Man can transcend his intellect by means of intuition, defined by Bergson as "...instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely."⁴ This development has been brought about by intellect.

Intuition perceives the élan vital. To know a thing it enters into its inner being; a state of soul with which it is in harmony, through imagination. Bergson compares this with entering into a character in a book and coinciding with him in his innermost thoughts and desires. Only thus can one attain absolute perfect knowledge of others and, also, of oneself.

³Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. xi.

⁴Ibid., p. 176.

Intuition leaves the whole of reality intact. It is not restricted to looking on a static past, but perceives the movement, the constant change of the being-made. Unlike the intellect, which merely combines old ideas, it creates fresh unique ideas by melting and mixing the materials supplied.

To see with the spirit, one must with effort twist the will on itself. A risk is implied here: ". . . the greatest successes have been for those who have accepted the heaviest risks."⁵ Because of the great exertion necessary, and the risk for something which does not last, intuition has generally been sacrificed to intellect. Only in vague discontinuous glimpses do we see the "invisible breath" that bears the living.

We have this sudden illumination before certain forms of maternal love, so striking, and in most animals so touching, observable even in the solicitude of the plant for its seed. This love, in which some have seen the great mystery of life, may possibly deliver us of life's secret.⁶

Intuition must always become intellect; the élan vital must congeal into matter. Freedom creates habit and in so doing stifles itself. Living thoughts become dead in word, in short, "the letter kills the spirit."

⁵Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 132.

⁶Ibid., p. 128.

APPENDIX B

ALBERT CAMUS -- RELIGION, REVOLT, CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABSURD

Camus refers to attempts to introduce transcendental factors into man's life as leaps of faith. In his view, by nature of the dialectic which produces the absurd, a leap cannot be made because to do so man denies his lucid vision of the world which created the absurd. The absurd is born of man's questioning a silent world. When a leap is committed the eternal is added to the real world of man's experience, thus modifying one of the premises of the dialectic and eliminating the necessity of the absurd, on which the need for a leap was based. Camus accuses such writers as Chesterton and Kierkegaard of abrogating their responsibilities in this way.

The absurd man, on the other hand,
does not take such a levelling process.
He recognizes the struggle, does
not absolutely scorn reason, and
admits the irrational.¹

In this lucidity there is no place for hope. Hope only exists because of man's nostalgia for an all-encompassing explanation. To be absurd, reason must be lucid enough to know its

¹Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1942), p. 28.

own limits (i.e. it must be aware of the absurd). To escape by suicide is to belie the human condition. To escape by concocting a meaning in eternity is to elude the human condition. To live in the harsh light of the absurd, to challenge the universe continually in the consciousness of an inevitably meaningless death is to truly live. Man must revolt constantly; that is the first consequence of the absurd.

The revolt takes two forms, metaphysical and historical. The first is man's rejection of God in favour of the human value, opposed to the idea of salvation for only some.² The second is revolt against human oppression, where men "use nature to conquer history."³ Both forms of revolt have the effect of uniting men in the same action and situation and must be undertaken in union with others.⁴ For the revolt against God, Camus issues the defiance that if some men cannot reach salvation then all will reject it while the unity of men in political revolt establishes limits on what can be done and precludes the use of deceit or terror.⁵ The nihilist idea of "anything goes" must be replaced by a new human value with man at the centre participat-

²Thomas Hanna, The Thought and Art of Albert Camus (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1958), p. 111.

³Ibid., p. 118.

⁴Ibid., p. 156.

⁵Ibid., p. 104.

ing in an "eternal becoming." Camus pleads with his readers to take up this life of revolt and not give in to the temptation to hope for a better world in the afterlife, or to accept the secure conformities of middle class society or slavery.⁶ This life of revolt must be a continuing process. There can be no revolution which will solve anything, for revolutions to succeed must surrender to political realism⁷ and impose absolute values⁸ on its own accomplishments in order to justify its holding of power. It is the action of constant revolt which unites men and gives them values as selves.

In his revolting, the absurd man realizes that he was not really free before his confrontation with the absurd. Neither in a world of absolute rationality, where man's actions are walled in by immutable laws, nor in a world of irrationality in which some superior external reality determines the meaning of man's actions, can freedom exist. But upon the realization of absurdity, man is freed by becoming conscious of his existence in a continual parade of Nows. The future ceases to exist for him. This freedom is the second consequence of the absurd.

⁶Thomas Hanna, The Thought and Art of Albert Camus, p. 120.

⁷Ibid., p. 100.

⁸Ibid., p. 125.

These consequences of the absurd establish the guidelines for the absurd man.

The present and the succession of presents before a constantly conscious soul is the ideal of the absurd man.⁹

He prefers courage, which allows him to live without appeal, and reasoning, which makes him aware of his limitations, to the nostalgia which would allow him to draw on the wall-spring of eternity to quench the oppressive heat of absurdity. His morality is limited by the lack of qualitatively appraisable consequences.

⁹Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (1942), p. 47.

APPENDIX C

FUTURIST THEATRE

It is not a widely known fact but the three artists mentioned in connection with futurism, Marinetti, Balla, and Boccioni, also wrote plays.

Marinetti, Emilio Settemelli, and Bruno Corra, drew up "The Synthetic Futurist Theatre: A Manifesto" in 1915. Their plea was for a "FUTURIST THEATRE: that is, a theatre absolutely opposed to old-fashion drama, which drags out its depressing, monotonous processions. . ." ¹

Michael Kirby expounds on futurist drama:

One aspect...developed the private (and often poetic) mental world of symbolist theatre. Insanity and "states of mind" were exploited for both their shock effect and their metaphorical and metaphysical implications (Vagrant Madmen). Simultaneous interest in psychological subtlety and the theatrical externalization of information produced plays with little or no reference to a real or imagined objective environment: the place matrix was the mind itself (Weariness). Thus, before the official advent of surrealism, the futurists were

¹Fillippo Tommaso Marinetti, et al., "The Synthetic Futurist Theatre: A Manifesto" TDR XV (Fall, 1970), p. 142.

staging the irrational with the same directness, palpability, and "rationality" as any realistic presentation of the external world.²

More important though is the fact that

futurism prefigured almost every nonrealistic approach to theatre in the twentieth century. Although they have not received due credit, the futurists' work and theories led directly to the performances of dada, surrealism, Russian constructivism, and the theatre of the absurd...³

²Michael Kirby, "Futurist Performance," TDR XV (Fall, 1970), p. 127.

³Ibid.

APPENDIX D

RICHARD SCHECHNER'S PERFORMANCE CHART

	<u>PLAY</u>	<u>GAMES</u>
Special ordering of time	Usually	Yes
Special value for objects	Yes	Yes
Nonproductive	Yes	Yes
Rules	Inner	Frame
Special place	No	Often
Appeal to other	No	Often
Audience	Not necessarily	Not necessarily
Self-Assertive	Yes	Not totally
Self-Transcendent	No	Not totally
Completed	Not necessarily	Yes
Performed by Group	Not necessarily	Yes
Symbolic reality	Often	No
Scripted	No	No
.....		
	<u>SPORTS</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>
Special ordering of time	Yes	Yes
Special value for objects	Yes	Yes
Nonproductive	Yes	Yes
Rules	Yes	Yes
Special Place	Frame	Frame
Appeal to other	Yes	Yes
Audience	Yes	Usually
Self-Assertive	Not totally	Not totally
Self-Transcendent	Not totally	Not totally
Completed	Yes	Yes
Performed by Group	Usually	Usually
Symbolic reality	No	Yes
Scripted	No	Yes
.....		
	<u>RITUAL</u>	
Special ordering of time	Yes	
Special value for objects	Yes	
Nonproductive	Yes	
Rules	Outer	
Special Place	Usually	
Appeal to other	Yes	
Audience	Usually	

	<u>RITUAL</u>
Self-Assertive	No
Self-Transcendent	Yes
Completed	Yes
Performed by Group	Usually
Symbolic reality	Often
Scripted	Usually

Note: Happenings and related activities are not included as theatre in this chart. Happenings would not necessarily have an audience, they would not necessarily be scripted, there would be no necessary symbolic reality. Formally, they would be very close to play.

APPENDIX E

RELIGIOUS REFERENCES IN WAITING FOR GODOT

Estragon's reference to "the wind in the reeds" (p. 13b) recalls Matthew 11: 7-10:

And as they parted, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went out into the wilderness to see? A reed shake with the wind?

...For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way for thee.

Vladimir hints at the parable of talents in his line, "Such an old and faithful servant!" (p. 22b)

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. (Matthew 25:21)

The Lord in the above parable is Christ and there certainly are many references to Him in the play:

Pozzo as Christ: pp. 15b, 18a, 22a, 30a, 43a, 50a.
Lucky as Christ: pp. 22a, 23a, 27a, 30a, 31a.
Vladimir as Christ: pp. 45b, 58a.
Estragon as Christ: pp. 7a, 34b, 37b, 40a.

Lucky's dance of the net recalls Psalm 25:15:

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord;
for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

APPENDIX F

HEGEL'S MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONSHIP

Hegel's thesis is this -- that self-consciousness creates the master-slave conflict that eventually results in freedom. "Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself . . . it is only by being acknowledged or 'recognized'." The presence of the "other" is essential for self-consciousness to exist. But when the two selfs confront each other each desires to cancel the other and thereby assert its own self-hood. There is a life-and-death struggle where each self seeks to assert its own self-consciousness at the cost of annihilating the life of the other and does so at the risk of its own life. Yet consciousness of its own self requires the existence of the other self in order for its own recognition to be sustained. There thus arises the master-slave relationship. True self-consciousness is reached when self and other both become self-conscious individuals. Hegel feels there must be a denial of the past as coercive. Man's freedom or his independent existence depends upon his "sublation," that is, of his breaking away from the past but still not ignoring it. There is both a preservation and a denial.

To put it more simply, Hegel is saying that self-consciousness is the awareness of one's personal position within the world and within the time structure (i.e. environmental and historical self-consciousness) which results in the creating of values, especially personal values. This sense of possible value leads to a struggle to attain the values fully.

The master and slave consciously exist for one another. The master seems to be a powerful force in comparison with the slave who is as if an animal. The master's authority is obeyed or else there is punishment. The master mediates and calculates; he does not see the slave as a human being of equal worth. Consequently, it seems that the more despotic the master, the more independent the master feels but in actuality he is very dependent upon the slave. This is due to the fact that in order to achieve independence another individual is required in whom we can assert our own independence and so become recognized as self-subsistent to that other. In doing so we recognize ourself in that other for the other is an element within ourself.

The slave refuses to put his life on the line for values. He is truly a servile being who cannot act for his values due to fear. He chooses not to risk his life. It is as though he willingly exists as a 'sheep' in this world, but he is really prevented from ever living his values.

The slave, however, lives the immediate life, the natural realm. He is acted upon by the master and in turn the slave acts upon nature. Yet the master is, paradoxically, dependent on the slave for he carries out the transformations of the world with the claims of another. The master becomes impotent; he is dependent on the slave besides being tied to the competence of his slave.

The slave works on nature. He knows this and it makes him a master. From this he has a certain limited freedom. The slave's work is a form of progress. But the master is alienated from Nature. He fights and plays but he is not an agent of Geist. He is merely a catalyst to the one who works.

So the self is transformed by working in the world. As man can become master of his environment through work, so spirit progresses through the phenomenal world through work.

But Hegel claims that man is a spiritual being and through the master-slave dilemma he assumes spiritual progress and transforms himself from the natural to the spiritual world. This projection requires an act of will and a conscious awareness. Progress occurs only when human freedom realizes itself. It is only in an attitude that can rise above the whole master-slave distinction that self-consciousness can adequately be realized.

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